

APRIL, 1924

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20.

The SMART SET



FREE

When you send for the large rug shown here you get with it a 27 in. x 54 in. rug of the same weave, pattern and rich coloring. And if you decide to buy the large one, after 30 days' trial, you pay nothing for the smaller one. It is FREE on this special offer, which is made to obtain 10,000 new Hartman customers at once.



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by the Famous
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"Masland" process rugs have been famous for 25 years for wearing quality and for their fast colors, which are "steam boiled" into the fabric after weaving and go through to the back. They have heavy, all-wool face; close, strong weave and extra weight. Read Hartman's guarantee below.



Brings this Wonderful "Masland" 9x12 ft. Seamless

TAPESTRY RUG

Send only \$1.00 and Hartman, the Largest Home Furnishing Concern in the World, will ship this 9x12 ft. rug and with it, on

30 days' Free Trial, the free 27x54 inch rug. If not satisfied, return them and we will refund your \$1.00 and pay transportation charges both ways. If you keep the rugs, take nearly a year to pay for the small one.

**Guaranteed to Outlast Any Other
Woven Tapestry Rug at Same Price**

Hartman guarantees that these rugs are woven and dyed by the famous Masland process, that they have more wool on the face, more strands of wool to the inch and greater weight than any other tapestry rug sold for the same money. Rich Brussels effect in tan background and a handsome Chinese design in red, blue, brown and tan. Colors go through to back and guaranteed fast. The world's greatest rug bargain. Order No. 34FMA33. Bargain Price, \$29.95 for 9 ft. x 12 ft. Rug. Pay \$1 now. Balance \$2.70 monthly. The 27 x 54 inch Rug is Free.

HARTMAN
FURNITURE & CARPET CO.
Dept. 6167 Copyright, 1924, by **Chicago**
Largest Home Furnishing Concern in the World



Note!

Don't confuse these rugs with ordinary rugs which have only "surface" colors. The rich colorings of "Masland" process rugs are guaranteed fast and go through to the back.

FREE BARGAIN CATALOG

Over 300 pages (of which 68 pages are in actual colors) of the world's greatest bargains in Furniture, rugs, carpets, sewing machines, silverware, farm implements, etc. Enclosed monthly. 30 days' Free Trial.

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If You Want to
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Rugs, Just Pin
a Dollar Bill to
Coupon and
Mail TODAY!



HARTMAN FURNITURE & CARPET CO. Dept. 6167 Chicago,

Enclosed find \$1.00. Send the 9x12 ft. "Masland" Tapestry Rug No. 34FMA33, Price \$29.95, and with it the 27 x 54 inch rug absolutely FREE. I understand that if I am satisfied I will send you \$2 monthly until the full price of the 9 x 12 foot rug, \$29.95 is paid. Title remains with you until paid in full. If satisfied, after 30 days' FREE trial, I will ship both back and you will refund my \$1.00 and pay transportation charges both ways.

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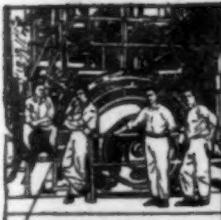
Occupation of Head of Household _____

How long have you lived at your present address? _____

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Earn \$3500 to \$10,000 a Year

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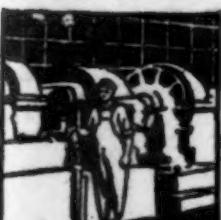
**20 Years Old—
Makes Almost
\$500 a Month**

Harold Hastings of Somerville, Mass., says, "The profit on my electrical business amounts to \$475 a month. My success is due entirely to your instruction. You make your men just what you say—Electrical Experts. No one will ever make a mistake enrolling for your course."



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**\$30 to \$50
a Day for
J. R. Morgan**

"When I started on your course I was a carpenter's helper, earning around \$5.00 a day. Now I make from \$30 to \$50 a day and am busy all the time. Use this letter if you want to—I stand behind it." J. R. Morgan, Delaware, Ohio.

It's your own fault if you don't earn more. Blame yourself if you stick to your small pay job when I have made it so easy for you to earn \$3500 to \$10,000 a year as an electrical expert. Electrical Experts are badly needed. Thousands of men must be trained at once. One billion dollars a year is being spent for electrical expansion and everything is ready but the men. Will you answer the call of this big pay field? Will you get ready now for the big job I will help you get? The biggest money of your life is waiting for you.

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I will train you just like I trained the five men whose pictures you see here. Just like I have trained thousands of other men—ordinary, everyday sort of fellows—pulling them out of the depths of starvation wages into jobs that pay \$12.00 to \$30.00 a day. Electricity offers you more opportunities—bigger opportunities—than any other line and with my easily learned, spare time course, I can fit you for one of the biggest jobs in a few short months' time.

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Don't let any doubt about your being able to do what these other men have done rob you of your just success. Pence and Morgan and these other fellows didn't have a thing on you when they started. You can easily duplicate their success. Age, lack of experience or lack of education makes no difference. Start just as you are and I will guarantee the result with a signed money back guarantee bond. If you are not 100% satisfied with my course it won't cost you a cent.

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MAR 13 1924

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April

The Most Daring Book Ever Written!

Elinor Glyn, famous author of "Three Weeks," has written an amazing book that should be read by every man and woman—married or single. "The Philosophy of Love" is not a novel—it is a penetrating searchlight fearlessly turned on the most intimate relations of men and women. Read below how you can get this daring book at our risk—without advancing a penny.

WIPLL you marry the man you love, or will you take the one you can get?

If a husband stops loving his wife, or becomes infatuated with another woman, who is to blame—the husband, the wife, or the "other woman"?

Will you win the girl you want, or will Fate select your Mate?

Should a bride tell her husband what happened at seventeen?

Will you be able to hold the love of the one you cherish—or will your marriage end in divorce?

Do you know how to make people like you?

IF you can answer the above questions—if you know all there is to know about winning a woman's heart or holding a man's affections—you don't need "The Philosophy of Love." But if you are in doubt—if you don't know just how to handle your husband, or satisfy your wife, or win the devotion of the one you care for—then you must get this wonderful book. You can't afford to take chances with your happiness.

What Do YOU Know About Love?

DO you know how to win the one you love? Do you know why husbands, with devoted, virtuous wives, often become secret slaves to creatures of another "world"—and how to prevent it? Why do some men antagonize women, finding themselves beating against a stone wall in affairs of love? When is it dangerous to disregard convention? Do you know how to curb a headstrong man, or are you the victim of men's whims?

Do you know how to retain a man's affection always? How to attract men? Do you know the things that most irritate a man? Or disgust a woman? Can you tell when a man really loves you—or must you take his word for it? Do you know what you *MUST NOT DO* unless you want to be a "wall flower" or an "old maid"? Do you know the little things that make women like you? Why do "wonderful lovers" often become thoughtless husbands soon after marriage—and how can the wife prevent it? Do you know how to make marriage a perpetual honeymoon?

In "The Philosophy of Love," Elinor

Glyn courageously solves the most vital problems of love and marriage. She places a magnifying glass unflinchingly on the most intimate relations of men and women. No detail, no matter how avoided by others, is spared. She warns you gravely, she suggests wisely, she explains fully.

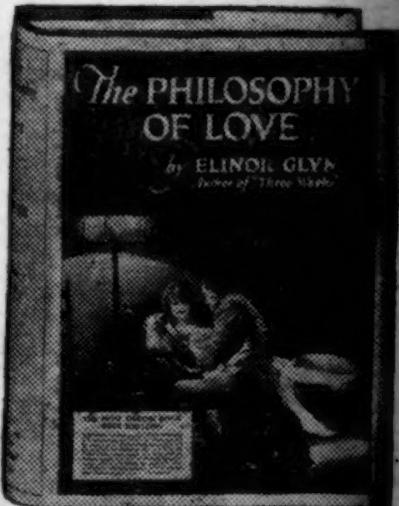
"The Philosophy of Love" is one of the most daring books ever written. It had to be. A book of this type, to be of real value, could not mince words. Every problem had to be faced with utter honesty, deep sincerity, and resolute courage. But while Madame Glyn calls a spade a spade—while she deals with strong emotions and passions in her frank, fearless manner—she nevertheless handles her subject so tenderly and sacredly that the book can safely be read by any man or woman. In fact, anyone over eighteen should be compelled to read "The Philosophy of Love"; for, while ignorance may sometimes be bliss, it is folly of the most dangerous sort to be ignorant of the problems of love and marriage. As one mother wrote us: "I wish I had read this book when I was a young girl—it would have saved me a lot of misery and suffering."

Certain shallow-minded persons may condemn "The Philosophy of Love." Anything of such an unusual character generally is. But Madame Glyn is content to rest her world-wide reputation on this book—the greatest masterpiece of love ever attempted!

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Over 75,000,000 people have read Elinor Glyn's stories or have seen them in the movies. Her books sell like magic. "The Philosophy of Love" is the supreme culmination of her



WARNING!

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Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An answer to an ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, if it has not come already, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" nor a financial formula. It is not a political panacea. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—human happiness, especially in the later years of life. And there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science where values must be proved. It "works." And because it does work—most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from disappointment and misery. Millions will rejoice because of it in years to come.

The peculiar value of this discovery is in its virtue for lifting the physical handicaps resulting from the premature waning of the vital forces of life, whether due to overwork, over-worry, sickness or the general over-expenditure of nervous energy in the strenuous living typical of the modern day. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient, "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, vibrant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization, with its wear and tear, rapidly depletes recuperative capacity, and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime.

But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages



ago a Persian poet, in the world's most melodious epic of pessimism, voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of summer too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search, without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth"—the means for renewing energy and extending the summer time of life.

Now, after many years of research, science announces unconditionally that lives clouded by the haze of too-early autumn can be illumined by the summer sun of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay, and the physical and mental vigor of former years again enjoyed in work and recreation. And the discovery which so adds to the joy of living is easily available to every one who feels the need of greater energy and vitality.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has won the highest praise in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years with extraordinarily gratifying appreciation for the success it has demonstrated. It is now put up in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, for distribution to the general public.

Anyone who finds life losing its charm and color or the feebleness of old age coming on years too soon, can obtain a double strength treatment of this compound, sufficient for ordinary cases, under a positive guarantee that it costs nothing if it fails to prove satisfactory and only \$2 if satisfied. In average cases, the compound usually brings about gratifying improvement in a few days.

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APRIL, 1924

No. 4 ✓

The SMART SET



The Man of the Hour

By Mary P. Chappell

THE man made his way among the tables: his *savoir faire* was perfect. His cynical eye looked neither to the right nor to the left. People on all sides spoke to him; beautiful women in glistening gowns challenged him; distinguished men vied with one another to attract his attention; he did not honor them with a glance nor did he deign to hear.

He moved among the tables with head erect: his *savoir faire* was perfect. . . . "Let them all wait for their checks" he muttered—he was going into the kitchen first to smoke a cigarette.



WHEN a man's ruined he pawns all the jewelry available; when a woman's ruined she buys it.



This and T'other: A Rhyme

By Banbury Cross

T HIS man sought in other men's lives
What other men seek in other men's wives:
Glamour, poetry, pistols, and knives.

Being as worms are, more or less blind,
What other worms seek of a sentimental kind
This worm sought but did not find.

This man found in other men's lives
What other men find in other men's wives:
Sameness, dulness, fetters, and gyves.



Yellow

By Hale Merriman

S HE had a passion for yellow. . . .
When I first saw her she had on a yellow house-dress and a yellow ribbon around her hair. She was scrubbing an Angora kitten with a mop brush twelve inches long. She smiled at me and I sent her yellow daffodils.
She had a passion for yellow. . . .

The next time I came across her she had on a yellow smock and was painting a picture of a sunset. I thought it was a fried egg, but she forgave me magnificently. I bought her a washtub of yellow chrysanthemums.

She had a passion for yellow. . . .

She was in an evening dress of a golden color with her hair piled high upon her head. Her fingers were long and exquisite and ringless. I thought of a topaz clinging to the third finger. I brought her orchids, yellow orchids and a box of lemon yellow bonbons.

She had a passion for yellow. . . .

She wore a very pale yellow wedding dress and upon her head was a strange headdress of yellow stones like the eyes of cats in the sun. She married a Chinaman.



You Two and We Two

[A Novelette]

By Achmed Abdullah

CHAPTER I

UP in Shanghai, where the eastern end of the overland road dips into the China Sea, times have changed. Ships are no longer argosies that follow the call of adventure beyond all outer charting and flicker their house flags in the breeze of unknown isles, but steel-made, haggling freighters, whose chantey is coal and dividends. Business is no longer a swaggering, picaresque romance upon the purple hills and the sea's blue, but a prosy rubric of facts and figures, earnest and escrow, indenture and indorsement. Nabobs are no longer two-fisted, crimson-nosed swashbucklers who breakfast on a raw egg and Cayenne pepper stirred in a pony of Holland gin and prefer a Nanking singsong girl to a muslin-frocked Massachusetts Miss recently out of finishing school, but asthmatic, gold-coining automatons, safely esconced behind a stock ticker, patent filing cabinets, and relays of private secretaries with immaculate, almost episcopal manners and pin-stripe worsted suits. Profits are no longer reckoned by a camel's load of Pekin candareens and shoe-shaped, archaic Manchu silver ingots, but by drafts on New York or London. . . .

Yet the Road has remained the Road; and throughout Shanghai, from the Bubbling Well to the gaudy opium houses on Chankieng Street, from the murky, stinking shallows of the Whang-poa River to the O-me-tu, the "Praise to the Lord Buddha," carved on the struts of the Fo K'ieng temple, the tale went that whoever received kowtow in

the governor's palace at Yarkand controlled the Road's western end, and whoever controlled the latter controlled the whole, including tremendous li-kin, in cruder words: graft.

* * *

There was no difference of opinion.

All the whites agreed, crystallizing their judgment into the American consul's heartfelt, slightly nostalgic:

"Sainted Tammany—what loot . . .!"

"I wonder who gets the lion's share?" asked another. "Old Tommy Crane or mandarin Po—?"

"Honest thieves! I fancy they split even—with a dash of odds on the Yank!" chimed in the purse-mouthed, dyspeptic Yorkshireman who looked after His Britannic Majesty's interests.

The yellow boys chanted the same refrain. Only they, all of them, officials as well as coolies—the meanest shroffs badgering English clerks for half-tael instalment payments on debts three years outlawed, the greasiest *compradores* whispering of poppy juice to furtive-eyed Lascar sailors, the veriest "pidgin Christians" of the Old Town trundling their putty-faced womenfolk on creaking, rickety wheelbarrows—added a spice of twisted Mongol tolerance to the Europeans' comments:

"The broken furnace may turn out good tiles."

"Indeed. Mandarin Po's li-kin is enormous. But it is also said that in his province the highways are secure, the taxes not too large, the evening rice plenty."

"He is possessed of the most exquisite and harmonious wisdom. So is the

coarse-haired barbarian who shares his house and purse. Both knew the foolishness of felling a tree to catch a blackbird."

Which reasoning, though unmoral and unethical, was true in its essence and practical in its application.

For in the twenty years that mandarin Po had been governor of Chinese Turkestan, in the twelve years that Mr. Thomas W. Crane, lately ward-heeler out of Chicago, Ill., had ably if unofficially assisted him, not once had the inhabitants considered it necessary to send a *ping*, or petition, to the Old Buddha, the Dowager Empress, or to the *fu mu kuan*, the "Parental Officials" in Pekin, clamoring for relief from oppression.

"It is better far to reckon on this year's bamboos than on the promise of next year's bamboo sprouts," opined the stout, provincial burgesses. And when certain serious, bespectacled, and entirely honest youths, who called themselves the "Central Chinese Committee for Liberty, Union and Progress," drifted into Yarkand one leap ahead of the Old Buddha's efficient Tartar executioners and whispered stealthy words in tea house and temple, the merchants replied that they knew little about democracy—"an empty sound it seems to us, like the tinkle-tinkle of a woman's jade girdle gems; but somewhere in the *Yung Lo To Tien* of exquisite Ming memory we have read about it being preferable to be ruled by one lion who cannot steal much, than by a thousand and three rats—who can steal a great deal."

Which again proves their regrettable Chinese lack of morals and ethics.

* * * *

To return to the Overland Road. Three thousand odd years old, three thousand odd miles long, it runs, never as flies the crow but, tortuously, as crawls the worm, from Shanghai west through Hu-pe and Szu-chwan, thence northwest skirting Tibet and west once more through a corner of Outer Mongolia, paralleling the Thian Shan mountains. Finally it descends southwest

and winds up in Yarkand, the capital of Chinese Turkestan; Yarkand of the Far West where the yellow Chinese are outnumbered by ruddy-faced Tartars and Kirgiz and Turkomans, where the Moslem call to prayers blends with the thin porcelain bells of Buddhist pagodas, where silk robes give way to fur cloaks and embroidered slippers to high felt boots: Yarkand, the chief commercial depot of Central Asia, where a spider's web of caravan trails connects the Middle Kingdom with the rich marts of Russia, India, Tibet, Afghanistan, Bokhara, and Persia. Trodden into deep canyons through centuries of incessant traffic, the Road is a monument to China's ancient greatness more stable and telling, if less blatantly dramatic, than boastful granite obelisks and marble temples and jeweled palaces; a monument to a continuous exchange of business and ideas, to a continuous civilization nearly as old as the yellow race itself.

Up and down this road, year in and year out, passes all China in vivid procession, hungry, eager for gain, out for the main chance, hurrying, ever hurrying, grudging the hours of rest spent in camp or towns by the way: flat-featured Mongolians with raucous voices, their hair burnt rust-red by the sun; coppery Kan-suh braves swinging along with a crackle of naked steel; smiling, butter-yellow Tibetans crowned with ludicrous mutton-pie caps and twirling their wooden prayer wheels; duffle-clad drovers from the Himalayas and the Pamirs, speaking an uncouth Toorki jargon; stately Pekin Manchus riding in gorgeously lacquered litters and surrounded by mounted and armed retainers; occasional ruffianly Afghans picking fights as they go along; nervous Ho-nan traders, their waist shawls bulging with gold; government couriers carrying despatches from one provincial capital to another and galloping their tiny, shaggy ponies no matter how steep and rough the road; anxious-eyed, tawdry half-castes from the treaty ports; soldiers of the Manchu Banner Corps on furlough to their western vil-

lages; Gilyak Tartars from the frozen north swaggering with the beggars' arrogance of their breed; and a leavening of ubiquitous, chattering Cantonese coolies.

Men on foot. Men in palanquins. Men on horse-back and camel-back. Men old and young, and the women and children after their kind.

But ever and always on the move. Ever and always cold and practical, shrewd and patient, spicing the banter of the road with keen barter; calculating even beneath the outer gesture of Kan-suh truculence and Afghan savagery and snobbish, sneering Manchu superciliousness; preferring, with the shamelessly materialistic philosophy of an ancient people, peace to strife, mediocre results to high-flung theories, and the meager comfort of the living to the memory-fattened glories of the dead; averse to spilling the tea and burning the evening rice for the sake of mouthing, nonconstructive heroics; and all those who trekked as far as Turkestan paying *li-kin* to mandarin Po and Thomas W. Crane, and—to quote the latter—"proving that it's a darn sight more profitable to sell what other people use, than to use what other people sell."

"And still more profitable," replied mandarin Po, "to sit on a high chair of honor—as you do and I, O wise and older brother—and see to it that neither seller nor user gets too little or"—winking brazenly—"too much."

"Well—" rejoined Thomas W. Crane, voicing somehow the view of the local merchants—"we give them a first-chop administration. And I'm no reform nut. If the laborer is worthy of his hire, why not the governor—?"

"Absolutely!" purred mandarin Po.

And they looked at each other, feeling singularly happy and friendly and contented.

CHAPTER II

A STRANGE team they were: the one an American, angular, lean, long of limb, pink and tan as to complexion,

grey-haired, grey-eyed, freckled; the other a Pekinese Manchu, yellow, silky, urbane, smooth, immensely obese, with bluish-black hair and slanting, sloe eyes, the nails of his right-hand thumb and second finger grown to a fantastic, curling length and covered by delicate sheaths of gold and lapis lazuli.

The one of the West, Western; the other of the East, Eastern. Yet there had been a certain similarity in the fateful pendulum of their careers.

Thomas W. Crane had been a brilliant young lawyer in his native Chicago, with the supreme court, the presidency itself, shining like a Holy Grail in the autumnal distance of his full life. Ward politics had come first, of course; slapping people on the back, kissing small grubby babies, gossiping with their mothers, and—yes!—occasionally a little sociable nip in some saloon the other side of Dexter Hall.

Yearly his thirst increased while, proportionately, his earlier promise of great, lasting achievement dwindled. Still, he had not lost all his hold on his favorite ward. The marshaling of that curious and illogical phenomenon called public opinion had become second nature to him. His fertile eloquence, chiefly when he was in his cups, had not suffered, nor his readiness to close a tolerant eye when one of his underlings resorted to more primitive, more abysmal methods in convincing doubting Thomases that his party was the right party. So, a good many years earlier, when the nation was electing its president, he was able to swing a crucial block of hand-picked votes into the ballot boxes of the party which came out victoriously.

Reward was his.

"Tom Crane has to be taken care of," said a certain bigwig in Washington. "His ward was rather ticklish, but he turned the trick."

"Sure enough," another bigwig replied. "But—you know—"

"Yes, yes. Looks too much upon the wine when it is whiskey, eh?" The first speaker walked to a large map of the world spread on the wall. He

studied it with a saturnine twinkle in his eyes. "Ever hear of Yarkand?" he asked over his shoulder.

"What is it? I bite!"

"It seems to be a town in—" again he studied the map—"yes—it's the capital of Chinese Turkestan, 'steen million miles the other side of nowhere. Jack," he continued, lighting one of his famous cigars, "I've a hunch that this republic needs a consul out yonder. What say?"

"I say Amen. And I nominate Tom Crane for the job."

"Seconded and carried!"

Thus Thomas W. Crane became United States consul at Yarkand. It was so far away from the White House, and the salary was not much of a burden to the generous taxpayer, and there was not enough American business out there, at the back of the beyond, for him to do harm. And even this contingency became abrogated a year after his appointment when a cable reached the State Department:

"Resign. Not enough flutters or Singers sold here to keep me busy. Have taken position with mandarin Po. Am teaching him how.

"(Signed) CRANE."

"Teaching him how—what?" the first bigwig asked when he learned the news.

"Either how to shake up a Sazerac cocktail," the second bigwig replied, "or how to do the Chinese equivalent for ward-heeling. More likely the latter," he guessed; and guessed rightly.

* * * *

As to mandarin Po, the scion of an aristocratic Manchu clan in Pekin, he had passed high in the examination of the literati, and had received the degree of *chen-shih*, or "Eminent Doctor," at the Palace of August and Happy Education to the west of the Ch'ien Men Gate in the Forbidden City. Afterward he passed a no less brilliant examination at Oxford, was attached as secretary to several Chinese embassies, tried to stimulate his brain with opium—until, one day, perhaps giving way to an atavistic weakness, he surrendered, body and soul and ambition,

to the curling, black poppy smoke.

Still, to him too, was due a certain measure of gratitude on the part of those in power since, several years earlier, when first Young China had risen in Canton's yellow, stinking slums and under the name of the "Big Sword Society" had tried to knock off the fetters of Manchu autocracy, he had fought fearlessly for the Dragon Throne. The Old Buddha remembered, rewarded. Like Thomas W. Crane, he was sent into honorable exile, as governor of Yarkand. . . .

Manchu and American liked each other from the first. Perhaps the knowledge of their mutual earlier promises and later failure tested and tempered the link of sympathy between them. At all events they spent many hours together, grey eyes looking as tolerantly upon treacly opium jar, slanting, sloe eyes looking as tolerantly upon whiskey and syphon. But while whiskey is cheap in China, first-class opium is expensive; and when one day mandarin Po sighed and said that he did not know how to pay for his next month's swirling poppy dreams, Crane asked a surprised question:

"Isn't this job paying you well?"

"Fifteen thousand taels salary a year."

"Salary—my number ten foot! What about the extras?"

"You mean—"

"Exactly. Don't try and look like a cherub in an old-fashioned oleograph! Why—I always imagined that here in China the belief in the sacred prerogatives of graft is so strong as to be almost beautiful—almost a Buddhist ritual—?"

"Graft—? Oh—" Mandarin Po sucked in his breath. He was busy with the ancient Mongol pastime of saving his face.

But Crane cut in with impatient words:

"Never mind the fig-leaf in your speech! Graft—that's what I mean. Do you want me to be legal and Latin? *Sic vos non vobis*—don't get me yet, you old fraud? Must I be crude? All

right. Don't you know how to filch, sponge, forage, peculate, abstract, cabbage, and bilk?"

The Manchu blinked, swallowed, then smiled.

"Teach me how," he suggested mildly.

"What is there in it for me?"

"Fifty-fifty, O wise and older brother!"

"Fair enough!"

Thence the cable to the State Department. Thence, too, a year or two in which the province was mercilessly mulcted until, according to the time-honored Chinese custom, crimson placards began to appear here and there, warning the governor that the people would soon be forced—literally—"to express regrettable dissatisfaction by honorable revolution."

"If this happens and they send a *ping*, a petition, to the Old Buddha, off comes my head," said mandarin Po. "What are we going to do?"

"Darned if I know," replied Thomas W. Crane.

And then Yakoob Beg—though rather vicariously—solved their quandary.

CHAPTER III

THIS Yakoob Beg was a free-booting Moslem chief from Russian Turkestan who, whenever hard pressed for cash or when the latest and youngest addition to his harem cajoled or sulked for jewels, made a bargain with some white-bearded Moslem priest and declared *Jehad*, Holy War. Then—with the tacit approval of the Tsar's government, ever ready to fish in muddied water—he would sweep across the Chinese frontier followed by his band of hawkish Central Asian marauders, Moslems of many races, the bitter sweepings of Bokhara and Khiva, Khabul and Khokand and Samarkand, looting, burning, killing.

So it happened this time. Yakoob Beg and his braves were "out."

"*Hayah arbauba Islam!*!" shrilled their battle cry. "*Deen! Deen!*"

They tore into the peaceful chatter of barter and trade with the swish of

the sword, the jingling of turquoise-studded headstalls, the scream and bray of the war trumpets, the rasp of bamboo lance butts, the flat thud of homemade, soft-nose bullets. Here and there they galloped like a red whirlwind of destruction, blazing up and down the overland road with the leap and slash of their lean Moslem knives and the sun rippling crimson on lance blade and rifle barrel, while the wheeling, carrion-fed kites paralleled their progress on eager wings.

"*Hayah arbauba Islam! Deen! Deen!*"

A runner brought first news of the raid to mandarin Po simultaneously with the latter's discovery of a placard pasted on the very door of his palace. It was signed by both the Tartar and the Chinese communities of Yarkand. It was countersigned by the presidents of the Azure Dragon Trading Guild, the Guild of the Five Honorable Companies, the Guild of Benevolent Countenance, and the Guild of the Seven Yellow Storks; and it acquainted the governor in floridly courteous but unmistakable terms that, given the general dissatisfaction with his administration —*et cetera, et cetera*.

Mandarin Po looked from the placard to the despatch which the runner had brought, and back to the placard.

"My laughter," he said to Thomas W. Crane, "is like the laughter of a walnut between two stones."

"Meaning—?"

"That even the shrewdest fox goes at last to the shop of the furrier. I have two furriers to choose between. The Old Buddha and Yakoob Beg. In either case I shall lose my pelt."

"Then I would suggest Yakoob Beg."

"Why?"

"Because, from what I gather, you haven't even a sporting chance with the Dowager Empress, while Yakoob Beg—well—at least we can fight for our lives."

"Our lives? *We?*!"

"I am with you."

"Ah—exquisite and harmonious thanks, O wise and older brother!"

"Exquisite and harmonious poppy-

cock! I'm scared to be left behind here—alone—with all those wolves of Yarkand merchants down on me like a ton of bricks. Nothing doing. I go with you. All settled, is it?"

"Yes."

"Good. Now you go and call a meeting and give the boys a little patriotic spiel. Wave the old Dragon flag. Get recruits. In the meantime I'll try my fine Italian hand with the merchants. They are Chinamen—reasonable, philosophic human beings, always willing to listen to a compromise. They'll put a temporary stop to their placarding and threats of rebellion and sending—oh—whatyoucallems—*pings* to Pekin when they hear that Yakoob Beg's gang is in the offing and that you and I are going to march forth nobly into battle."

* * * *

Crane guessed right. The merchants listened to his suggestion. Placards were torn down, and the talk of revolution ceased, while under the whip of mandarin Po's opium-stimulated eloquence recruits poured in, put on odds and ends of uniforms, picked up odds and ends of weapons, and marched to the northwest with quivering yells of:

"Pao Ch'ing Mien Yang"—death to the foreigners and honorable loyalty to China!"

The battle developed into a campaign; two months, three; marching and countermarching.

Perhaps it was the blood of his ancestors, the Manchu conquerors, the iron-capped princes of Nurhachii's breed, that screamed in mandarin Po's veins. Perhaps, similarly, there was an atavistic throwback in Tom Crane's soul to a great-grandfather who, rifle in arm and knife in boot, had come out of Virginia into Kentucky in the days when Kentucky was the farthest frontier, and whose grandfather, following the shifting frontier, had drifted into Kansas when it was "Bloody Kansas." At all events, they fought well, led well, until, at the end of three months the broken remnants of Yakoob Beg's band fled back into Russian territory, while the head of their chief and more than a

hundred of his followers, stuck on tall bamboo poles, grimacing, stark, glassy-eyed, with a curiously iridescent, bluish-green half-light playing on their high cheekbones, adorned Yarkand's brown bastions, and while once more, as if nothing had happened, although perhaps just a trifle more shrewd, a trifle more patient, China poured itself down the great Overland Road—to find, here and there, a sacked and burnt village, a heap of grim battle refuse, a low circling of kites and hawks where mounds of skeletons bleached in the wind and the strong upland sun, and festering corpses of man and woman, of child and animal.

The governor's return was a triumph, with yellow Dragon bunting flickering in the breeze, and firecrackers blazing orange and crimson, and long-drawn shouts of:

"Ten thousand years!"

"Ten thousand times ten thousand years!"

There were speeches and enthusiastic thanksgiving and more speeches; mandarin Po's appropriate replies; and in the evening Thomas W. Crane suggesting to the latter a "little private celebration of our own."

A few minutes later, while outside the crowds were still parading the streets, the two friends sat down comfortably in the governor's study, and servants brought refreshments: opium for the one, whiskey for the other.

"First shot of hooch in three months!" Crane filled his glass; raised it. "Here's how, old man!" He moistened his lips; put down the glass almost immediately. "Po," he asked, making a wry face, "where did you get this whiskey?"

"Same old brand. Why?"

"Tastes like a punk variety of creosote. . . ." He pushed the glass away.

In the meantime mandarin Po had prepared his opium with agile fingers, kneading the brown pellet which the flame of the open lamp changed gradually into amber and gold, filling the pipe. He was leaning back, both shoulders on the mat, so as the better to

dilate his chest and keep his lungs filled all the longer with the fumes of the philosophic drug.

He took a short puff; coughed; sat up straight.

"What is the matter?" asked the other.

"Choked me. Too bitter." He looked at the opium jar. "First-choice number one genuine Shen-si Chandoo," he read the label. "Strange. I don't like it. . . ."

"As I don't like my liquor," rejoined the American; then, suddenly, laughed. "By ginger!" he went on. "Here's a fine howdyedo! Three months' roughing it without stimulants—dog-gone if we haven't lost the habit! Reformed in spite of ourselves! Now what are we going to do—?"

There was a knock at the door. The president of the Azure Dragon Trading Guild who, besides being the wealthiest and most influential merchant, held the local rank of *Poh K'uei*, "General Regulator" or mayor, entered, his obese body dressed in coquettish and decidedly unbecoming rose-red silk embroidered with tiny butterflies. He bowed, hands clasped across his chest.

"*Chin lai pu jung kuei hsia*—come in without kneeling," said the mandarin affably. "What is it, Wong Ng?"

"Excellency," replied Wong Ng, "I am here in the name of all the local merchants."

"Charmed!"

"Excellency," continued Wong Ng, "it says in the *Kung-Yang Chian* that when fire rages on the Kun Lun ridge, common pebbles and precious jade will be consumed together. Thus, in the hour of danger, vice and virtue are consumed together, and shineth then the man's real essence, the man's real soul—as your soul shone in the hour of battle, Excellency!"

"I bow! I bow!" smiled the mandarin.

"Yarkand is grateful to you and—" pointing to Thomas W. Crane—"to the foreigner."

"Again I bow!"

"So do I!" chimed in the American.

"Excellency—there were days when

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—ah—we called you *Hun-te-Kung*—the Duke of Confused Virtue. But now a new name has been conferred upon you."

"Namely—?"

"*I Ho T'uan*—Patriotic Harmony."

"Will you permit small and worthless me to bow once more. O brother very wise and very old? . . ."

"Furthermore," went on Wong Ng, "I read in the Younger Tai's Record of Rites that the upper and lower jaws mutually assist each other; if the lips shrivel, then must the teeth catch cold. You are the upper, we the lower jaw. We need each other. We cannot do without your prowess. You cannot do —ah—without our gold. Excellency—remain our governor! But—" kowtowing with outspread hands—"be pleased not to take too much *li-kin*!"

"Small and worthless I," replied mandarin Po, "is also slightly versed in the classics. I remember a line where Confucius speaks about it being better to do a mediocre deed at home than to burn incense in a far temple. I accept your proposal."

"*To fan sai lok*—thank you, thank you!" said the merchant, and withdrew, while Crane burst into a roar of long-suppressed laughter.

"I have to hand it to you," he said. "For a business nation you're a sure-enough, all-wool, nickel-plated business nation. You could sell safety razors at a barber's convention and get away with it. Never again shall I doubt the wisdom of the Chinese Exclusion Law. Po, old boy, you are the yellow peril!"

"Gold, too, is yellow," came the mild reply. "Does the white man mind?"

"I'll say he don't!" agreed the American.

CHAPTER IV

ABLY if unofficially assisted by Thomas W. Crane, mandarin Po continued to govern the province. He had given up opium, as the other had given up whiskey. For no moral reason. Simply because they had lost the habit.

"But otherwise," said the American

to a passing, rather shocked missionary, "we're no reform nuts. We're not nobble—nobble with two *b*'s. No, sir. We've discovered that it is a darn sight more businesslike to fatten the goose that lays the golden egg than to slit its gizzard."

So, while their *li-kin* was great, they saw to it that the highways were secure, the taxes not too high, the evening rice plenty. They suppressed all petty grafting with an iron hand.

"How do we do it? Why, brother—" said Tom Crane in answer to the same missionary's question—"did you ever try to sell the Brooklyn Bridge to a Tammany alderman?"

Turkestan was happy and contented. Trade in steadily increasing volume passed down the Overland Road, with the west clamoring for rice and pulse and soy-beans, the north for poppies, the treaty ports for tea and silk and salt, and the south for pottery and copper vessels. Up in Shanghai the whites admired and envied; and: "better far to be ruled by one lion who cannot steal much, than by a thousand and three rats—who can steal a great deal," said the Yarkand burgesses to the emissaries of the "Central Chinese Committee for Liberty, Union, and Progress."

When finally, after the Dowager Empress' death, China overthrew the Manchu throne and established the republic, the general turmoil was hardly felt in this far-away western backwater of Turkestan.

Mandarin Po, meticulously Mongol in correctness of demeanor, proceeded to the Temple of the Goddess of Mercy where he prayed long and fervently before the violet-faced idol that the Empress' soul might be permitted to jump the Dragon Gate and to find peace near the Seven Yellow Springs. For a month or two he wore white mourning robes, across his chest a salmon-colored ribbon embroidered with archaic hieroglyphics that read: "Dutiful Grief." Then he took his oath of loyalty to the new government and attended to his business, while north, south and east the republic ran its turbulent course.

Under the leadership of Yüan Shih-k'ai, his cohort of American universities-bred young enthusiasts arranged everything according to the most approved western pattern, with constitution, presidential election, party whips, and a mass of investigating committees all complete. Everything was there in fact, except the special genius of the Anglo-Keltic race.

Of course, they were so pleased with the cut of their new political and civilizational clothes that they forgot the glory of their old. So, north, south, east, decay stalked through the land. The lustrous roofs of the great sanctuaries were left to slip into the mud and break. The Temple of Confucius with its superb roof of amber-colored tiles resting on an intricacy of peacock-green eaves; the fine old memorial tablets of Ming and Sung that lifted their dazzling whiteness against the subdued green of cypress trees planted two thousand years ago; the cypress trees themselves; the huge spirit stairway in the Temple of Heaven, deeply carved with five interlaced dragons; the golden gods to whom the Manchus had prayed; the splendid trinkets of their hours of peace; the sacrificial jade vessels wherein the sodden meat and the unhusked rice were offered to ancestral spirits; the very philosophy, ethics, and genius of their ancient race—everything was betrayed and destroyed, while the embryo statesmen spoke and argued about democracy.

Only Turkestan, in the Far West, remained more or less undisturbed, since Yüan Shih-k'ai, the president of the republic, was wise enough to realize that without a strong hand at Yarkand the great Overland Road would go to rack and ruin—and the road was the central artery of China's economic body.

"Leave mandarin Po be," he said, when earnest young politicians clamored and objected.

"He is an imperialist, Mr. President!"

"He has sworn fealty to the republic."

"A foreigner is his confidential adviser!"

"I thought you believed in international good-will?"

"He takes *li-kin!*"

"His province does not seem to mind."

"It is against the principles of the republic, Mr. President!"

"What are political principles except the scrupulous embodiment of the trite?"

So mandarin Po and Thomas W. Crane were left free to carry on their administration until one day, in Shanghai, the American consul brought news to the other members of the club:

"Gentlemen," he said, "old Tom Crane and his Manchu side-kick will have to look after their laurels."

"Why—?"

"Robert Emmet Chang-tü has arrived—not to forget Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky."

"Whoever are they?"

"What their names imply: radicals, congenital rebels, incorruptible young idealists! My boy went to college with them. He wrote me. Watch for the fireworks!"

* * * *

IT was Levinsky's father, an honest Kieff tailor migrated to New York's East Side on the tail-end of a seasonable pogrom, who had in a moment of fervor and hero worship conferred on his son the names of Theodore Roosevelt.

Robert Emmet Chang-tü, on the other hand, had conferred his Christian names upon himself when during his senior year at Cornell, where he had been sent through the efforts of a Baptist missionary in his native Canton, he had come under the glorious spell of Erin's age-long fight for liberty and had read therein a parallel with his own oppressed land. He was the only Chinese in America who subscribed to the *United Irishman*. Not that he specialized in the green isle. India, too, was sympathetic to him. So were the Armenians, San Domingo, the black-and-tan vote of Alabama, the I. W. W., the Russian Jews, in fact everybody who was persecuted. And it was through this monomania—a perfectly honest

monomania—that he became friends with his classmate Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky, who was similarly afflicted. Together they would dream of the future; dream greatly, shiningly.

During their senior year they were expelled for editing a campus weekly called "*The Torch—a Cry in the Wilderness of Academic Oppression*," which on a notable Saturday apostrophized the whole university faculty and the board of trustees as an "obese, flagging-jowled, pendulous-nosed, gold-bloated, blood-sucking, swag-bellied bourgeoisie."

Hereafter, for a year or two, Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky and Robert Emmet Chang-tü became well-known New York characters. For a year or two they earned a mere living by causing neurasthenic hearts of both sexes to skip a beat when they addressed them from the platform of the People's Forum on a variety of subjects ranging from dress reform to sex reform, from prison reform to political reform. Every day of their lives they stated rusty surface truths which, somehow, ought to have been lies. Every day they were right statistically, and wrong from every single last other point of view.

Then came the Chinese revolution, the republic.

"Comrade!" said Robert Emmet Chang-tü. "We must go to China!"

"How?" asked the more practical Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky. "We're both broke."

"Where there is a will, there is a way!"

There was. Amidst clacking tea cups, they spoke to a gathering of women; rich women with bobbed hair and ideals. Their speech, partly filched from the writings of a famous radical, described young China as "a significant matrix both unitary and infinite," "a base-soil of proud sublimation glowing with warm, cosmic rhythms," "the lucid and impregnable hope of democracy's manifold mind," and "a challenge into the very teeth of privilege-scabbed corporationism."

Net result: twelve hundred and eighteen dollars and five cents; and, seven weeks later, the two friends stepped into the presence of the president of the Chinese republic.

They spoke long and ardently. He was silent long and ardently. Perhaps, as he listened to them abounding in the sense of their own, self-intoxicated righteousness, for a fleeting moment he may have regretted the Old Buddha's efficient Tartar executioners. But the dragon-embroidered robes of Manchu pomp had given way to sober frock-coats; deeds to words. He sighed.

"Yes," he said finally, "the republic needs you."

"May I suggest," said Robert Emmet Chang-tü, "a place in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs—?"

"Or," chimed in Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky, "in the Finance Ministry—?"

"Neither!" came the firm rejoinder. "Your talents would be wasted in Pekin. Yarkand! That's where you are needed. It's a danger spot. Mandarin Po is a reactionary. See what you can do. But peacefully. The days of brute force are over."

They were delighted; flattered; then mentioned sordid details:

"We spent all our money to get here."

"The republic is in bad straits financially," said the president. "But I shall personally advance you enough to take you to Yarkand. Then you must shift for yourselves. You have youth, energy, brains, enthusiasm. May your success be like the *Hoa Tchao*—the Birthday of a Hundred Flowers!"

And he bowed them out of his presence, and immediately afterward sent a special courier to Yarkand warning the governor of their coming and winding up:

"Remember the saying of the wise Duke Ts'c that a needle is sharp at only one end. Remember, too, that the phoenix is not as good at roosting as the chicken. So do not be down-hearted!"

CHAPTER V

"DOWN-HEARTED? Why should I be?" asked mandarin Po when he had read the letter.

"Hm—" grunted Thomas W. Crane. He seemed bothered.

"What is the matter?" continued the Manchu. "Let them come. *Hayah!*—I am a reasonable man. I shall give them a golden pill and cure them of their disease—"

"You mean—you will grease their hands?"

"Exactly."

"You can't."

"Why not?"

"They have ideals."

"Ideals are like nuts. You must eat them before they become hollow—then get new ones."

"All right for an old reprobate like yourself. But these kids—I know their type. I've met their doubles at municipal elections back home. You can't bribe them the ordinary, pay-as-you-enter way, and they haven't enough sense to know when they are licked. That's what makes them hard to handle politically. I guess we'll have to fight them with their own weapons."

"For instance?"

"Wait till they get here and show their hand. Then I'll slip a couple of big, juicy ace spots from the bottom of the deck and fill our own hand. A full house beats a straight any day—and I don't care how straight they are!" Thomas W. Crane wound up his rather mixed pun.

A week later a blue-tented Pekin cart drawn by a brace of mules deposited Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky and Robert Emmet Chang-tü in Yarkand. They had passed rapidly through Shanghai and Pekin, spending only a day in either place, and now this far, western Turkestan jerked startlingly through their focus with the harsh, sneering overtones of Central Asian Islam across the suave silkiness of its Chinese civilization.

Levinsky was frankly homesick. He felt as if he had been transplanted into

a motley, bewildering land of too much color, of sudden, useless splendor—and sudden, useless ugliness. At home in New York he had been able to span, by intellect, perhaps by desire and envy, the chasm between the smooth wealth of upper West Side and the scabbed, pauperized reek of lower East Side. Here, where riches and poverty met in the same block, often in neighboring houses, and where the former did not seem to pity the latter nor the latter to hate the former, the hard contrast made him nervous. Nor could his friend help him to understand.

For Chang-tü, though native-born, yet of Canton, the light-hearted, hysterical city of the warm south, still more estranged through years of residence in America where, in spite of surface chaos, life somehow ran evenly between a policeman's whistle and a hooting motor horn, had to readjust himself from the first. These people, western Chinese, Kirgiz, Turkomans and Karakalpaks, resembled neither the smiling, excitable Cantonese nor the men of Pekin with their meretricious courtliness of phrase and gesture. Tall, big-framed, wide-stepping, often bearded and turbanned, they moved ponderously and grimly, each toward some definite object of his own.

As the two young idealists passed through the streets beneath a sunset of crushed rose-pink, as they sensed the great, stony Central Asian soul pulsing everywhere, immense in passive power, progressing inexorably and rather cruelly, Karl Marx and Debs, the People's Forum and Cooper Union seemed far away. And when they had found a Tartar inn, had eaten their frugal supper and looked out upon the dusty caravanserai yard where a number of fur-capped, felt-booted Turkoman cameleers were talking in harsh gutturals while nearby their hobbled, shaggy, shuffle-footed beasts were chewing the cud in the night's peace, fear and homesickness rushed upon them full-armed.

But be it said in their favor that no thought of turning back entered their

heads and that the next morning, in spite of their misgivings, they entered energetically upon what they were pleased to call their "educational campaign."

"We must not temporize or compromise!" said Robert Emmet Chang-tü. "The cancer of corporationism has bitten too deeply into the political system of Turkestan! Ruthless attack! Up and at them! That's our slogan, eh?"

"Sure," agreed Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky. "No time to lose. Besides—well—our finances aren't exactly flush."

Traveling down the Overland Road they had picked up a mass of information. During the next days, asking questions right and left, they learned more until they had a true enough impression of mandarin Po and Thomas W. Crane as two unregenerate reactionaries who only gave lip service to the republic, took graft, interpreted the law as they wotted, and cared not a snap of their fingers for democracy's principles. But—though this is going ahead of the tale and quoting mandarin Po after he had regained his loss of face—"they were too young to comprehend the wisdom of the ancient saying that much wealth will not come if a little does not go; that a diamond with a flaw is preferable to a common pebble with none; that when the market is brisk the seller does not stop to wash the mud from his turnips."

So, a week after their arrival, a large crowd gathered about a huge, crimson-and-black placard that covered a wall in Ha-Ta-Men Street, flanked—typically—on the left by a tumbledown hut where a leprous Tartar beggar whined for alms in the name of Allah, on the right by a great shop where precious, snow-white Sung porcelain served as foil for the blue and peachblow of exquisite Ming pottery.

"Workers of Yarkand, awaken!" began the text, brushed in Chang-tü's best Chinese hieroglyphics. *"Unite! Make known your sovereign people's will to the gold-bloated, blood-sucking aristocratic oppressors! The day of*

the proletariat is at hand—et cetera, et cetera . . .”

“Look!” exclaimed a merchant. “He calls mandarin Po a thief stewed in the fat of his own greed! A fool, to write such words—*hayah*—like the fool who rides a tiger!”

“Aye—and he who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount!”

“Paper tiger with paper teeth!”

“Who is this Chang-tü who signs the message?”

“A new-comer—a Cantonese mud-turtle educated by the coarse-haired barbarians!”

“By Buddha and Buddha! The cock went abroad for seven days—and returned a peacock!”

“A precocious lad! His father is still in the womb, and already the son thinks of marriage!”

“What will not a goat eat or a fool say?”

“Ahee! Talk does not cook rice!”

“The sea is not worn by little, little ships!”

“It is said that he has a friend, a foreigner!”

“To be sure—rats know the ways of rats!”

Decidedly, public opinion was not in sympathy with the two young crusaders, and it was all crystallized into the words of a shriveled, berry-brown old coolie who, after making an improper gesture with thumb and second finger toward the placard and calling its author a name which reflected equally on the latter's ancestry and his own morals, said:

“Bah! The drum that booms most loudly is filled with wind!”

This, too, though differently expressed, was Thomas W. Crane's opinion when mandarin Po, in somewhat of a huff, asked him if he had heard the news:

“Nothing to be scared of, old man.”

“I know. Two fleas cannot raise a coverlet.”

“Besides, your province is prosperous and contented.”

“Yes, yes. But consider the indignity of it—my loss of face!”

“Forget your face. Take one look in the mirror—that's all you have to do . . .”

“I am serious,” interrupted the Manchu. A light like a slow flame eddied up in his oblique eyes. “I shall send my Tartar servants and catch these two arrogant youths—and make them eat stick—a great deal of stick.”

“Not on your life!”

“Who is to prevent me?”

“Your horse sense. Make martyrs out of them? Martyrdom is like the measles—darn catching! First thing you know, fifty more young idiots, yellow and white assorted, will come beating it out here on the chance of becoming martyrs for the Cause, and once you get enough martyrs the revolution will blaze forth as a fact—that's usually the way with revolutions. Take a leaf from the English—and let 'em talk!”

“But—I repeat—my loss of face . . .”

“Sit tight and wait for developments. Be patient—and you'll get that precious face of yours restored to all its pristine splendor.”

“By the way—I understand that they are poor. I have already given orders that no credit be granted them by the merchants!” He turned to Yi Feng, his private secretary, a Harvard-bred young Tartar, who had come in. “You saw to that?”

“Yes. Excellency.”

“Fair enough,” commented the American. “But. . . .”

“Well?”

“There are always our Russian brethren across the border, eager to fish in our pond. They'll invest a few loose roubles in MM. Levinsky & Co.”

He was right. For, flushed with enthusiasm, the two reformers decided to feed the flames of social revolution by issuing a Chinese magazine which, in memory of Cornell days, they called “*The Torch*,” and it was due to Levinsky's latent racial business instincts that they incorporated it—with much trouble, since Young China, amongst other western innovations, had also copied the civil code and regulations applying to corporations of one

of the more easy-going States of the Union. So here they were, editors and owners of The Torch Publishing Company, Inc., capital stock 25,000 taels. And when they discovered shortly afterward that the new venture had cost them their last cent, when the inn-keeper told them gruffly to be gone and the grocer pointed at a vermillion banner above his counter which read: "No credit given—former customers have taught caution," it was one of the Tsar's ubiquitous Secret Service agents who stepped into the breach.

This gentleman, a Russian of debatable ancestry who, strictly for the time being, called himself Fyodor Antonovitch Grushkine, breathed not a word of Tsar or imperial politics. On the contrary, he declared himself a radical of radicals and—to quote Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky—"certainly kicked through handsome!"

For a while their activities progressed gloriously. Their placards were numerous and gaudy. Their journalistic efforts were magnificent. Too—"money praises itself," said the riff-raff of Yarkand's bazaars—they were glad to have their crooked fingers gilt for a mere parading of streets beneath crimson flags and hoarse shouting of: "Down with the oppressors! Long live the social revolution!" The only fly in the ointment was that mandarin Po, acting on Thomas W. Crane's advice and in spite of the fact that his thin-skinned Mongol pride squirmed and itched, paid no attention to them.

When finally the latter's patience was about to give way under the strain, it was once more the American who came to the rescue.

"I have an inspiration," he said.

"Hm—" grunted the other.

"Do you know a ward-heeler's chief qualification?"

"I hate to tell you. I am your friend."

"Wrong! His chief qualification is an expert knowledge of human psychology."

He went to mandarin Po's desk, busied himself among the files, then

called on Robert Emmet Chang-tü and Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we are in opposite camps. But—I trust that we are both sincere?"

"You—sincere?" sneered Levinsky.

"That's the trouble with you radicals," rejoined Crane. "You always underestimate the other fellow's principles and ideals. I am convinced of *your* sincerity. I honor *your* principles, though I can't subscribe to them. That's why I am so disappointed in you."

"Why?" demanded Chang-tü.

"Because you're letting a Tsarist agent subsidize you."

"Grushkine? Why—he's a radical!"

"Tell it to the marines!" And Crane spread on the table ample, documentary evidence from mandarin Po's files that Grushkine had during the last twenty years been a factor in numerous unsavory intrigues, from arranging *pogroms* to stirring up strife over half of Asia. He left without waiting for a reply, sure of the result of his psychological experiment. He was right.

"Oh—if I had known!" sighed Chang-tü; and when his friend, more practical, suggested taking the money just the same, saying that the Cause needed it and there was no harm in spoiling the Egyptians, he went on: "No! It's tainted money!" and that evening he showed the door to Grushkine who forthwith betook himself south to the Pamirs whence he threw his gold-baited net across the borders of British India.

CHAPTER VI

A WEEK later, with all but a couple of hundred taels spent, the two young crusaders were faced by a problem as well as by a truth. The problem consisted in how to raise capital for their magazine which by this time had become their pet endeavor; the truth was that the riff-raff of Yarkand, no longer paid to be social revolutionaries, promptly turned into reactionaries and rolled down the streets shouting:

"Long live mandarin Po!"

"Alas—the ingratitude of mobs!" exclaimed Chang-tü, like many a reformer before and since, while peace reigned once more in the governor's palace.

"Speaking about loss of face," said Thomas W. Crane, "you ought to see their faces—pinched, haggard—I don't think the boys are eating enough. I feel sorry for them."

"Thank Buddha that I am a Buddhist," smiled mandarin Po, folding his hands across his comfortable paunch. "I do not have to be sorry for my enemies."

They fell to talking business. For the American, some time ago, had used his influence to obtain oil concessions south of Yarkand and had incorporated a company in New Jersey to develop his properties. He took a stock prospectus with subscription blank attached from a heap on the desk and showed it to the other.

"Better invest, old man," he said.

"I think I shall, O wise and older brother."

Po filled out and signed the blank while, unbeknown to both, an impish wind brushed through the open window, sucked up one of the prospectuses, and swept back out the window, the printed sheet flying in its wake. The wind continued its fantastic career. It carried the bit of paper far—clear through Jade Street and the Street of the Pork-Butchers—clear to the Tartar inn where, with a swoop like that of fate, it struck Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky, who was standing in the caravanserai yard, wondering how he might raise enough money to carry on "*The Torch*."

He had not eaten that day, and when the paper from Crane's desk flopped against his chest and stuck there, he was about to snap it away with an impatient: "Damn!" But he happened to look at it, and the first words which he saw brought him up standing. For they were:

"Thomas W. Crane, Chairman of the Board of Directors."

After which he read through the

whole prospectus, considered, whispered: "Providential!" and hurried back to his room.

"Chang-tü," he said—for he was inclined to be epic in moments of enthusiasm, "let us take a weapon from the arsenal of blood-stained capitalism! Listen!" He explained his plan in detail. "Do you see?" he wound up.

"But will the people—?"

"They are fools. They will not take what is offered to them for nothing. But they will always buy. Besides, it's our only chance. We have enough money left to issue one more number of our magazine. We'll print the appeal on the front page, in red. I'll write it in English, and you'll translate it into Chinese."

"Very well."

A few days later coolies ran through the streets, distributing copies of "*The Torch*," leaving one at the door of the governor's palace, where Thomas W. Crane found it. He opened it, aimlessly read the first page, then, quite suddenly, burst into laughter.

"Po," he asked, "how's the old face? Still suffering from loss?"

"Somewhat," came the guarded reply.

"What'll you give me if I help you regain it completely and for keeps?"

"I'll give you that oxen-blood Keen-Lung vase of mine."

"It's a bargain. Look here!" He read out the announcement which, in red Chinese hieroglyphics, adorned the first page of the magazine:

"HOW ABOUT TAKING A LEAF OUT OF THE CAPITALISTIC BOOK? HOW ABOUT A TWENTY THOUSAND TAEL FUND FOR "THE TORCH"? WORKERS OF YARKAND! COMRADES! WHAT ABOUT BUYING A SHARE?"

Followed a blank more or less faithfully copied from the financial prospectus which the wind had carried from mandarin Po's desk straight to the hands of Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky:

"I hereby subscribe for ... shares of stocks in THE TORCH PUBLISHING COMPANY, Inc., at ten taels per share and enclose taels in full payment.

Name
Address

"I don't see. . . ." said mandarin Po.

"You will presently." Crane walked over to the corner where, on a small taboret, flanked by two bronze statues of Wen Tchang, chief of the five Taoist divinities of letters, a perfect specimen of oxen-blood Keen-Lung porcelain showed its ruddy sheen among the perfumed incense sticks. "I've always envied you this particular bit of china. Thanks awfully."

"For nothing. You haven't got it yet."

"Just wait! Lend me your secretary?"
"Certainly."

Po clapped his hands, and Yi Feng came in.

"Yi," asked the American. "Do those two young fellows—Chang-tü and Levinsky—know you by sight?"

"No, sir."

"Good. Tell me—are you a social revolutionary?"

"Buddha! No!" came the shocked reply.

"All right. You're going to be one in the shake of a lamb's tail."

"I?"

"Yes. You. And you're going to prove it in the best way in the world. By cash." He showed him the prospectus. "You will call on the boys, introduce yourself as a rich young Chinese fresh from Harvard and in sympathy with their ideas, get their confidence, and buy those shares."

"You are trying to buy control of the magazine, sir?"

"And then something! Buying control is easy enough. I made a wager with your boss that I'd restore his face to its virginal, immaculate glory. You studied law, didn't you?"

"Both at Harvard and Pekin."

"Familiar with the new Chinese legal

code, corporation laws and all that?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Listen to me." He lowered his voice, speaking at length. "Think you can put it across?"

"I shall try, sir."

"Go to it! . . ."

He did. And to Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky and Robert Emmet Chang-tü, who that morning, after a sketchy breakfast, had been given three hours by the gruff Tartar inn-keeper to pay up or clear out, the arrival of Yi Feng, charming, in sympathy with their political principles, and, best of all, armed with a fat roll of hundred tael bank notes, seemed more than propitious.

"Chang-tü," said Levinsky, pocketing the twenty thousand taels while Yi Feng slipped the corresponding stock certificate into his loose sleeve, "I hate to admit it—but, perhaps, there is a God!"

"Yes, yes!" agreed Chang-tü. "If not a God—then—at least—an Immutability of Eternal Justice! I am so happy. Now we can carry on our fight for social revolution—against the oppressor—the. . . ." He interrupted himself as he heard Yi Feng's sigh which, incidentally, was a pure product of art. "What is the matter, comrade?"

"I—oh—" stammered the latter, wincing under the appellation—"perhaps I was foolish to buy the shares . . ."

"Why?"

"I am afraid of mandarin Po. He has spies everywhere. If he should find out that I bought them. . . ."

"Well? . . ."

"He can hire and bribe witnesses, have me adjudged an incompetent and put into an insane asylum. You see—the Chinese republic has copied all the western laws! Automatically all my property would be administered by a trustee, one of his creatures, who would vote *The Torch* stock—my controlling majority block of stock—as mandarin Po dictates! You two would be ousted from your editorial positions!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Levinsky.
"What is to be done?"

They pondered, considered, argued; and finally Yi Feng said that he had an idea:

"Let us have a stockholders' meeting at once and elect you two directors and editors for a term of years. Let us draw up an iron-bound contract between you two and *The Torch Publishing Company*. I am a lawyer. I'll draw up the contract, and then you look it over, and we sign it. And—may I look at the incorporation papers?" They were produced, and he read them. "Comrades," he went on, "I would like to suggest a few changes in these articles. Safety first—even in the fight for social justice!"

"By all means!" agreed Levinsky.

"The *Shang Shuh*, the secretary of the provincial, administrative board, happens to be a friend of mine." And here Yi Feng spoke the absolute truth since, in mandarin Po's patriarchal administration, he himself filled this office. "He will see to it that the changes which I am going to suggest are made legally and speedily." He outlined them. "Do you agree, comrades?"

"Entirely!" said Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky.

"Entirely!" echoed Robert Emmet Chang-tü.

CHAPTER VII

IT was the following Saturday, and the two editors were preparing the next issue of *The Torch*, when the door opened and mandarin Po entered, accompanied by Thomas W. Crane. Levinsky's first impulse was one of frank alarm. He was about to beat a masterly retreat behind the table when, seeing the peaceful smile on the Manchu's face and the unwarlike cigar clamped between Crane's lips, it occurred to him that they had no intention of assaulting him or his friend, that thus his fear had been groundless. The thought made him mad. It also made him brave. So he blazed up epically:

"What do you want here, blood-gorged oppressors?"

"Indeed!" Chang-tü chimed in, in Chinese. "Ni seung iu mi yeh ni?"

"We—?" smiled Crane. "Why—we just dropped in to see how *The Torch* is getting on."

"None of your business!"

"Oh yes, it is! Mandarin Po and I are stockholders."

"You are—what?"

"Stockholders. In fact we own control: and, to cross our *t*'s and dot our *i*'s, we two are you two's bosses. See, Theodore?" He grinned like the cat that has stolen the cream; pointed at Chang-tü. "See, Robert. We're representing Yi Feng."

"Oh—" exclaimed Chang-tü, remembering the latter's fear—"you put him in an insane asylum!"

"What for? Isn't he the governor's private secretary—and a darn efficient one. Didn't he bilk you good and proper?"

"Oh—" Levinsky slurred, stopped, turned pale.

"Sure enough. I sent him here to buy the shares. I primed him up to his deep-toned, nefarious misdeeds. And now, young fellows, lend me your ears!"

"We have nothing to say to you."

"Then don't say it. Just listen. We own a majority interest in your little concern, eh?"

"What of it?" Levinsky decided to play trumps. "We have a hard-and-fast contract with the publishing company by the terms of which. . . ."

"Which Yi Feng helped you to draw up!"

"Oh—" Again Levinsky turned pale.

"Boys," went on Crane, "there are more than a couple of colored citizens in your particular woodpile. Your contract is all right. I admit it. But do you realize that this brand-new Chinese republic has copied wholesale most of our good old American laws?"

"For instance?"

"The one which compels all magazines to publish in their pages, I forget

now often during the year, a sworn statement of ownership. Well—how would you two like to have your brother radicals in Canton and Chicago and Pekin and the Bronx and God knows where else, read a little six-inch bit in *The Torch*, stating that its owners are you two—and we two?"

Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky was silent. His brain was full of buzzings, and he felt as if he was being needle-pricked all over. He was in a trap. He knew it. There was just one way out. He took it, after whispering rapidly to Chang-tü.

"Our brain child," he said, with a return to his old epic manner, "we give it up. The octopus has crushed us. But we are not disheartened, are we, Chang-tü?"

"Indeed not!" exclaimed the latter. "Others will come after us—to carry on—to win! In the meantime—we give up our stock in the publishing company. . . ."

"And we resign from our editorial positions!"

"And you still are twenty thousand taels to the good, eh?" suggested Thomas W. Crane.

"Exactly!" Levinsky agreed triumphantly.

"Here is where the other colored citizen in the woodpile gets in," laughed Crane. "Theodore Roosevelt," he asked, "did you read those changes in your corporation papers good and thorough?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Remember paragraph five?"

"It interests us no longer. We have resigned!"

"It should interest you. For it says there—"

"What?"

"It says—cutting out all the legal rigmarole which makes it so bully and binding—that, hereafter, the official title of the magazine is not *The Torch*, but. . . ."

"But—?"

"The Torch — edited by Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky and Robert Emmet Chang-tü!" Get the noble thought be-

hind it? Your names are part and parcel of it! Cede your stock! Resign your editorial jobs! But your names will keep right on being immortalized if you like it or not. And what will your fellow-radicals think of you—say of you?"

"We shall tell them the truth!"

"But will they believe you? You just bet they won't. I know. I was in politics, back home in Chicago. They'll say that you are the hired agents of—what do you call it—oh yes—the blood-gorged dragon of reactionary corporatism. Your names will be a stench in the nostrils of the righteous! Boys, you're in the soup! I have you by the slack of your pants, haven't I? Haven't I?" he repeated. "Just bob your heads if you can't talk."

Theodore Roosevelt Levinsky inclined his head. So did Robert Emmet Chang-tü.

"Now that's settled," Crane went on, "I'll tell you what we have decided. We could be real mean and have the next issue of *The Torch* come out with a peppery defence of the mandarin's administration. But we won't. It would be bad politics. This little magazine of ours, with you two boys as editors, is going to switch gradually. It's going to have a slow, but steady change of heart. All right? Just bob your heads once more."

Again they inclined their heads. There was nothing else they could do. And then for the first time since he had come in, mandarin Po opened his lips.

"You two are young," he said, "and we two are old—and wise—and perhaps—ah—not altogether as dishonest and selfish as you think? You don't believe me? Of course you don't. But presently you will grow in years—and perhaps in tolerance and understanding. And then you will comprehend the saying of the Excellent Confucius that the broken furnace may turn out good tiles; that if there is no oil in the lamp the wick will be wasted; that it is only when the cold season comes that we know the pine and cypress to be evergreens."

He turned to Thomas W. Crane:
 "Are you coming, O wise and older
 brother?"

And it was hours later, in his palace,
 that mandarin Po remarked to Thomas

W. Crane, apropos of nothing:

"Truth to the young is a bitter, single
 fact, while to those of riper years it is
 —ah—a compromise both gentle and
 ironic. . . ."

And he was silent and smiled beatifi-
 cally at his old friend.



I Do Not Regret It

By John Torcross

I HAVE worshiped you by day and
 dreamed of you by night.
I do not regret it.

I have eulogized your beauty, com-
 paring your eyes to the stars and your
 lips to the petals of the rose.

I do not regret it.

I have showered you with rare and
 costly gifts.

I do not regret it.

I have cudgeled my brains to devise
 some new delight that might give you

pleasure.

I do not regret it.

I have spurned the society of others
 in order to be at your side.

I do not regret it.

I have wept tears of anguish at the
 thought of having caused you a mo-
 ment's discomfort.

I do not regret it.

And now you desert me to marry
 another.

I do not regret it.



THE one thing a woman has against a taxicab is that the step isn't high enough.



POLITENESS: tissue paper wrapped around a flying brick.



Among the features of the May SMART SET will be "The Dramatic Art," a one-act play of Viennese theatrical life, by Harry Kemp; and a novelette by L. M. Hussey.

Notes on Personalities

IV—F. Scott Fitzgerald

By B. F. Wilson

This article on F. Scott Fitzgerald is the fourth of SMART SET's current series on certain figures of moment in the arts.

The series deals with men and women who are coming into their own today in the various fields of aesthetic endeavor, and who are being talked about in the metropolis.

The Romantic Egotist

THE strange attraction that a pool of quiet waters has for the boy or man with a stone in his hand is largely a matter of personal curiosity. How far will the ever-widening circles of water spread? What happens when the last wave breaks upon the bank is of no interest to him; his attention is concentrated upon his own reaction to the disturbance of nature's serenity by his ability to hurl a stone.

This is the story of a boy who, some five years ago, threw a rock into the placid waters of American literature with such force that the splash was heard all over the country, and the waves are still crashing into larger convolutions, bringing in their wake strange matters which continue to absorb the interest of the world at large.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald was the first author to chronicle the younger generation at the moment when youth was becoming supreme and defiant. Pubescence had mushroomed overnight into a powerful factor of every-day existence. A new era was dawning. A new type of girl was being created.

This was the beginning of the Flapper Age, an epoch during which the heroine of "This Side of Paradise" exerted a drastic influence. Her actions, her speech, her manners, her habits and her appearance were under the microscope, and she permeated every phase of life from the school-room to politics.

When it was learned that the author of "This Side of Paradise" was a young man in the first year of voting possibility, the amazement of the reading public turned into something like frenzy. The book became a best-seller in two weeks. Critics raved over the discovery of a new literary personality. Their blurbs on the merits and the depravity of the book were taking up all the space in the daily press. F. Scott Fitzgerald's became a household name: débutantes dreamed on it, hard-boiled critics foamed at the mouth, college youths and faculty members quarreled, mothers sighed, fathers wept, shop-girls envied and country wenches patterned their conduct along the lines exemplified by the heroine of the story—in short, something more than a stir was made by the appearance of this in-

coherent, disconnected, flagellating, first novel which sold into the hundred thousand copies.

Various and contradictory personality paragraphs about the author appeared before the public in every sort of pamphlet. He was an old man; he was a young *roué*, he was a typical Westerner who wore a big sombrero; he was a college youth who wrote only when completely spifflicated on absinthe and gin. He was a bad moral influence for the country. But the wise men of letters sat back and predicted fine things of this infant-in-quills.

Scott Fitzgerald admits them to be right. He is intensely egotistical, but it is the same egotism that a precocious youngster shows to an admiring group of adults. Even as the youngster with smug satisfaction recites his little piece, his tongue in his cheek, so does the blond-haired, blue-eyed historian of the Flapper drive his pen over the blank page. . . .

He has set forth, for instance, in his writing that all the great heroes of the world had blue eyes and yellow hair, (as he himself has). It is logical hence to expect the unusual when one meets this good-looking young man. He is vivacious, imaginative, forceful — and slightly unbalanced. The latter is his chief charm. It reveals itself in impulses which would never occur to a more prosaic soul; in his day-dreams; in his worship of the beautiful, and in his creation of characters who linger in one's memory.

He is an actor. The dramatic instinct has been a large part of his character ever since he was a little boy. This trait, intensified by his soaring imagination, is the backbone of his work.

History of the Romantic

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD was born in 1896 and was christened for his famous ancestor who wrote our national anthem. His father, a heady young Southerner, followed Greeley's advice and found himself in Minnesota when scarcely more than a boy, penniless but

hopeful, and in love with the daughter of a wealthy wholesale grocer. Since this was the age of optimism, the couple married, and for the first twelve years of his life the future novelist lived in St. Paul, as one of the most widely-discussed show pieces of that city. He had to sing and recite to his mother's guests, and in addition it became noised about that he had written a story at seven, and at ten had begun a history of the United States.

His first tragedy occurred when he was six years old, and the episode left a wound which he will never forget. He was giving his first birthday party. The dramatic instinct soared as he saw himself clad in his long-trousered sailor suit assuming the role of host. For weeks he had been revelling in anticipation. It was to mark his formal entrance into society, and he kept meticulous watch over his attire during the hours he had to wait before the party would begin. It started to rain. Nobody came. All the long afternoon he waited silently, and when the rain stopped and the sun came out, he stood on the porch of the house still hoping that the children would arrive. No one came, and finally dusk fell. He went into the house and at the sight of the birthday cake and other refreshments his heart almost broke.

At school he wanted to lead all activities. Unless he was permitted to start the games and was chosen as leader, he was unhappy. This trait is not a very popular one amongst schoolboys unless the desire is reinforced by brute strength, and Scott was a delicate child. Consequently he was unpopular, and on one occasion he was told to "go away," that "he wasn't wanted." The boy's egotistic nature suffered deeply. Furthermore, he had a habit of writing all through class in the back of his geography book, or Latin, or mathematical books. This added to his unpopularity because the boys couldn't understand his absorption. As a result of the eternal scribbling, his studies fell short of parental expectations, and he was sent away to boarding-school.

His Early Freudian Complex

FROM his earliest memory Scott Fitzgerald suffered from a pedentia complex. The sight of his own feet filled him with embarrassment and horror. No amount of persuasion could entice him to permit others to see his naked feet, and up until he was twelve this fear caused him a great deal of misery. He refused to learn how to swim. His family accused him of being afraid of the water, but although he endured agony at being called various names which implied lack of courage—he refused to go into the water. He loved the sea, and pleaded that he be allowed to wear his stockings swimming. This complex suddenly disappeared one day without any reason.

When he was eleven he had his first short story published in *Now and Then*, the school organ of the St. Paul Academy. It was called "The Mystery of the Raymond Mortgage." The mortgage in question was mentioned exactly twice in the story: in the title and again in the second paragraph, after which the young author became so engrossed in a lurid murder which one of his characters had committed that the mystery mentioned was never solved.

A year later he wrote "Elavo," a novel in verse, dealing with knights of old, Roman strongholds, drawbridges, et cetera. School requirements at the time included the reading of Walter Scott! It was during this period of his life that he obtained the only historical education he has ever retained. An Aunt Clara, whom he visited during vacations in New Hampshire, was firmly convinced that her nephew was not long for this world, and that the best way he could strengthen his hold on life was to swallow one raw egg every day. To enforce this she bribed him with a twenty-five-cent piece for each egg he could keep down, and when he discovered that with this hard-earned wealth he could purchase a volume of Henty, his distaste for the egg vanished. Each day he would rush

down to the local bookshop with his quarter and by night the volume would be finished. . . .

The entire city of St. Paul was thrown into hysterical confusion not long after this by the appearance of a new dramatic genius. A lurid drama, entitled "The Captured Shadow," was presented at a local theatre. The members of the cast were rather young, but so was the author. He was fifteen, and never before had an audience been privileged to witness such a mixture of all the old familiar thrillers. The jokes were pilfered outright from a joke book. The hero, who naturally was played by Scott Fitzgerald, inasmuch as he wrote the drama, drew great applause as he gracefully swooned into the heroine's arms before the final curtain.

But in boarding-school he went off on a new tack. He saw a musical comedy called "The Quaker Girl," and from then on he filled dozens of notebooks with librettos modeled after Gilbert and Sullivan. He discovered that the only collegiate musical comedy flourished at Princeton, and on this information he made his choice of where he was to go to college.

He fell down on his studies during his Freshman year, but he wrote an operetta for the Triangle Club. The play was accepted and produced, and Scott caused great excitement as the most beautiful of the chorus girls.

This aptitude for female impersonation caused a furore at a prom at the University of Minnesota, where one evening appeared an unknown and beautiful young woman. She shocked her dancing partners by guzzling drinks and smoking fiercely, and in addition threw confusion into the host of collegiate youths who had surrounded her in admiration, by playing one of them against the other. After securing written evidence of ardent admiration from some of the most popular boys, she suddenly disappeared, like Cinderella at midnight, and for days the mystery was

the choicest bit of discussion in St. Paul.

A Coca-Cola Addict

IN the autumn of 1916-17 he embarked for an infantry officers' training camp at Fort Leavenworth—the poetry which he had been furiously writing for some time past in the discard—with a new ambition. This time it was to be the Great American Novel and accordingly every evening, concealing his pad behind his Small Problems for Infantry, he wrote a sort of biographical story of himself and what life meant to him. Despite the fact that this little game was detected and stopped, his burning ambition to finish the novel before he departed for Europe drove him to the Officers' Club, and every Saturday at one o'clock he sat down to his task in a corner of a roomful of smoke, conversation and a thousand and one interruptions from facetious fellow-officers. Stimulated by innumerable drinks of Coca-Cola, he wrote one hundred and twenty thousand words during the week-ends of the next three months. The book was aptly enough titled by the author, "The Romantic Egotist," and sent to a publisher's. It was returned with a long letter stating that while the manuscript was the most original received for years, the firm could not publish it. It was too crude and incoherent.

Scott never got overseas. Some six months afterward he came to New York, in the meanwhile having fallen madly in love and become betrothed to Zelda Sayre, a brilliant and beautiful Southern girl whom he met while at camp in Alabama.

He had to make money. But how? He tried to get a job as a newspaper reporter, but no one wanted him. Finally he went to work for Barron Collier, writing advertising copy during the day, and after office hours working on short stories. They were all returned. He made for himself a beautiful frieze which ran around his room out of the one hundred and twenty-

two rejection slips which he received from editors. He wrote movies. Song lyrics. Complicated advertising schemes. Poems. Sketches. Jokes. No one bought them. Near the end of June he sold a story for thirty dollars.

The ninety dollars a month which he was earning seemed too silly to waste any more time over, and besides, love was clamoring for recognition. So Scott decided to take a drastic step. He gave up his job, packed his bag and went back to St. Paul. There he announced to a somewhat surprised family that he had come home to write a novel. They took it with as little display of commiseration as possible.

In the next two hot months he sat steadily before his desk, revising, compiling and boiling down "The Romantic Egotist." He changed the title to "This Side of Paradise." It was accepted by special delivery. In the next two months he wrote eight short stories and sold nine. The ninth was accepted by the same magazine that had rejected it four months before. After the appearance of the novel he got married and brought his bride East. . . .

Now they live down at Great Neck, Long Island, where the sovereign of the family is a two-year-old female answering to the name of "Scotty," despite the fact that she had been christened Patricia. Mrs. Fitzgerald writes also. She has a queer, decadent style, luminous in its imagination, and very often Scott incorporates whole chapters of his wife's writing into his own books. He steals all of her ideas for short stories and writes them as his own.

Well-Known Author Tells Ambitions

HE is at present working on a novel. He wants to write a musical comedy and a play. He utters sentiments like this:

"When I was twenty I wanted to be King of the World, a sort of combined J. P. Morgan, General Ludendorff, Abraham Lincoln and Nietzsche, not to omit Shakespeare." There he stops.

There is an implication that he has hopes of being all this still.

"I would like to have an awful lot of money with which to buy all the books I want and a Rolls-Royce car."

"I'd like to spend eight months in travel, and have four children. They are cheerful, decorative and amusing to have around the house."

"I'd like to go into politics."

"I am glad I'm a young man in America now."

"I'd like to spend eight months in England during the Regency period. Life was so riotous and colorful and gay then. It was the last of the powder and patch days, and the great spirits like Johnson and Byron were casual figures on the street. Also it was beginning to be possible then for a man to earn his living with his pen."

"And I'd like to have been a young Englishman during the first decade of the present century. The Fabian Society was getting on its feet. Oxford and Cambridge were turning out interesting men, and the inhibitions of the Victorian era were passing away. I would hate to have been a young man between the accession of Victoria and her death."

"I'd like to have been a young Spaniard about 1550 in the glory of the Armada. I would hate to have been a Roman or a Greek of any period. I would like to have been a young Venetian when Venice was the thoroughfare of the civilized world and all the crusaders passed through her gates."

"My heroes? Well, I consider H. L. Mencken and Theodore Dreiser the greatest men living in the country today."

His imagination is the predominant power behind Scott Fitzgerald's pen. He gloats over a good simile as a woman would over a priceless jewel. He loves to roll gorgeous phrases on his tongue. His delight in the beauty of words is sensuous.

He is left-handed, and his chirography is that of a small schoolboy.

He is an earnest worker and when occupied in writing refuses to play. Although he is a boon companion he cannot escape from his thoughts, and in order to avoid hearing the telephone, encountering people, or listening to the every-day noises of his household, he has fitted a room over his garage and daily spends most of the waking hours in hard toil.



THE burdens of marriage are so heavy that it often takes three to carry them.



GAMBLING is the most puzzling of the vices. It gains a man friends by losing him money, and gets him money by losing him friends.



A MAN spends his youth planning to be happy in his old age, and his old age regretting that he didn't know how happy he was in his youth.



From the Chinese

Translations by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

Bidding a Friend Farewell at Ching-Men Ferry

SAILING far from Ching-mén Ferry,
Soon you will be with the people of Ch'u
Where the mountains end and the plain begins
And the river winds in wilderness . . .
The moon is moving like a mirror.
Sea-clouds gleam like palaces,
And the water has brought a touch of home
To bear your boat ten thousand li.

—By Li Po.

Thoughts of Old Time at Western-Fort Mountain

SINCE Wang Chün brought his towering ships down from Yi-chou,
The royal ghost has faded in the Golden Tomb.
Ten thousand feet of iron chain were sunk here to the bottom;
There was only the flag of surrender on the Wall of Stone . . .
Cycles of change have followed into the past,
While still this mountain-dignity commanded the cold river;
And now has come the day of the Four Seas' union,
And the old forts fill with ruin and with autumn-reeds.

—By Liu Yü-hsi.

A Chin-Ling Landscape

A GENTLE rain levels the river-grass;
And ghosts of The Six Dynasties pass a bird singing,
And still the limp willows on T'ai-ch'èng Road
Loom for ten li from the misty moat.

—By Wei Chüang.

The Rendevous

By J. Saxon Childers

I

YOU say that suicide is wrong. I'll not disagree. For me to kill myself is against the laws of God and society. Nevertheless I intend to do it. For I'm tired. Do you understand me? Tired. Tired! Since I was a little boy running around the mountains of Alabama I've had to work and work hard and happiness has been far from me and the loneliness of everything has broken me. Loneliness and the things that happened last night.

I'm not writing this for any publicity after I'm gone, nor am I doing it for any pleasure. I'm merely rehearsing what I'm going to have to tell the Lord God Almighty before daylight; because, if there is a God, I'll be talking to him pretty soon, and I guess that it will be up to me to plead my own case. Mark me. I'm not begging just to get into heaven. I don't give a damn about all the stuff that I am told that I will find there; it is the company of one person I'm seeking, and I know that the company I will find only with the angels.

I think that I'll pass over all the time before I went up into the Alabama mountains as a wood cutter. Yes, I think that I'll stake my case on what happened up there. There is no use boring God by telling him all about how I left college and enlisted and got knocked about on the Somme, and how when I got back home I found both my old Mother and Dad were gone, and how I drifted

to Mexico and to Cuba and back to the mountains of Alabama. No, there is no use in going into all that. "I'll just begin with the part where I got a job in one of John Lloyd's wood-chopping gangs and was told that "if you work like hell you may make a dollar and a half a day." I got that job ten months ago, but I didn't stay on it long, for the foreman of my gang talked about me and old Lloyd took me into his own office.

Lloyd was a peculiar man. Even as a wood chopper I had heard of his weird doings. That he was stern was certain and that he was cruel was widely believed. He had lost his wife when he was a man of forty, and since then he had cared for nothing divine or human except the memory of his wife and the daughter who had been the cause of the death of her mother. Lloyd had put the baby girl in a home and had taken to the mountains where he had made a fortune as a manufacturer of charcoal.

The first time I saw Mary Lloyd was a morning last July. I didn't hear her ride up and when she walked into the office, waved her riding whip and cried, "Hello, everybody, where's dad?" my internal organs all seemed to change places and I knew that there was the woman who owned me. She was a small girl but even in its smallness her body was perfectly formed. Her brown hair was bobbed and I remembered how, because there was so much of it, it seemed to stand out at least a foot from the side of her head. But it was her eyes, God in heaven, what eyes she had. Great

brown eyes that were solemn and merry at the same time, eyes that would make any man tremble. And when she laughed. Have you ever heard the mocking birds when, at twilight, they sing in some grape arbor down in southern Georgia? Have you ever heard them? Then you may begin to imagine what Mary's laugh was like.

"Where's Dad, I say? Are all of you dumb?"

"He's at the plant, Miss Mary."

"He's not at the plant, Mister Charley. I have just come from there."

"Then he'll be back here in a moment. Just sit down and—"

Mr. Lloyd walked into the office. His daughter bowed and said, "Good morning, Mr. Lloyd, I have called to know if you have any particular choice between a steak and a chicken for your supper."

"Which ever you like, Mary, though I think a fat hen."

"A fat hen it will be, Mr. Lloyd. And, Dad, do try to get home on time."

That was the first time I saw Mary Lloyd.

II

Two days later I was instructed to ride over to Decatur to carry a message. As I was leaving the office Mr. Lloyd told me to call by and ask Mary if she would like a ride. There was a something in my throat which prevented me from replying. I nodded and went out.

"Certainly I'd love to go. Just you amuse yourself for a minute and I'll be right down."

I sat at the piano and began to play. This was the first time I had played in months, and I lost myself. When I finished I turned to see the girl standing, her eyes closed, leaning against the door.

"You play beautifully. Do go on."

Her perfume reached me, and as the

subtle odor came into my brain there surged over me a sensation which left me in mid-air. I played, or rather I talked, for my fingers were merely keys which unlocked the vistas of my soul. I was playing one of Beethoven's things and I was telling her of my loneliness and of my delight in her presence, when I felt a something, a something which—I broke off.

"My message. We must go."

"But you will play for me again. You will. You must."

Throughout the ride we were quiet. For miles we rode, and there was only the sound of the hooves of the horses and the whirring of the wind as it bent the pines. How I longed to tell her how lonely I was. How there was no person, no thing, which I loved that I could call my own; how everything was just a nothingness, how I lived in a void.

When I left her she asked me to play for her on Sunday afternoon. I did. And the next Sunday. And the next. And the next. And the Sunday before Christmas I told her that I loved her.

"It's a sweet thing for a woman to hear," she said. "A sweet thing to hear from the man she loves." She kissed me.

Before that second, I, John Freeborn, had been an automaton. Life! I, a living being! I did not know the meaning of life. But her kiss! Ah, Mary, even then the mystery of God was upon you and His holiness and His power were yours.

On Christmas night it was the custom of the people of the settlement to have a tree when presents were distributed. Mary and I decided that we would tell her father by writing a little note and hanging it on the Christmas tree. We wrote the note that Sunday night.

Dear Dad: Dear Mr. Lloyd: We, the undersigned, find that this is the happiest Christmas that we have ever spent.

(Signed)

MARY LLOYD-JOHN FREEBORN.

III

CHRISTMAS night all of the people of the settlement gathered around the tree while the plant foreman acted as Santa Claus and gave out the packages. I passed Mary and her father. Mr. Lloyd turned to speak to one of the overseers. Mary called me.

"Like a silly little fool I've forgotten our note. You talk to Dad while I run get it."

"But, Mary, I'll go with you."

"Don't be foolish. If Dad's left alone he'll get terribly restless. Besides, I said that I would go get it, and you must remember that from now on you are to take orders from me. If Dad asks for me, just tell him that I will be back in a shake."

But she wasn't back in a shake. When she had been gone fifteen minutes I went after her. As I walked the path in front of her house I saw two men run out of the back door. I drew my gun and fired. One of the men dropped and the other dodged behind a hedge. I ran to the hedge but the man had escaped me. The sound of my shot brought the entire camp and when I told Mr. Lloyd my story he gave orders for the clearing to be surrounded. Then he turned and walked toward his house. He walked slowly, with his head bent forward and his feet sliding along the ground. He took no notice of the dead negro who lay directly in his path.

In a very few minutes Mr. Lloyd appeared and gave orders that every negro man in the settlement should come to the assembly hall and that all white men should patrol the edge of the clearing.

In the assembly room everyone had a regular place and when the negroes were all seated it was seen that there was only one empty chair. Mr. Lloyd had all of the white men called to the hall. Then he walked upon the platform, placed his watch upon the table and sat with his rifle

across his knees. He was pale but there had been no hesitancy in his walk, nor was there in his speech. His voice I can't remember clearly but there was a something about it which made me think of hell.

"All of you niggers have been drinking today but you are sober now and you know what has happened tonight. Bill Williams is dead. The other nigger is in this room. I had expected to run him down with dogs but since he chooses to stay rather than to run, I'm glad. It saves me time. Now, listen, every one of you knows who it was with Bill Williams. Look at the windows and doors."

In each window stood three white men and at the doors there were four, all armed with rifles. "See those guns. After I've finished talking to you I'm going to give you thirty seconds and if you don't tell me who was with Bill Williams I'm going to give the word and we'll kill every damn one of you. You understand me. Christ Jesus be my witness, either you tell me who the man is or else I kill all of you. Now, you've got thirty seconds."

There was no sound.

"Twenty-five seconds."

One negro began to sob and another to pray.

"Twenty seconds."

Many of the negroes were on their knees, moaning and wailing.

"Fifteen seconds."

There was a sound in the place as there is along the River Styx where the shades beg and plead for mercy.

"Ten seconds."

A big black leaped to his feet and shouted, "Lawd Jesus, I done it. I d—"

A volley was shot into him. He spun around, started to raise his hands, and wilted to the floor. I remember the satisfaction it gave me to know that I had put two bullets into him.

"Any nigger seen out of his shanty

in five minutes will be shot." Mr. Lloyd spoke with no change in his voice. "May I ask as a great courtesy that all white men will retire to their houses."

I started to walk toward Mr. Lloyd. "I understand, Freeborn," he said, "but give me a half hour before you come."

It was twenty minutes after that when the explosion took place. The earth trembled and the darkness of the sky was split by the column of light shot upward. Then all was bright, for the entire plant was in flames.

In the house there was nothing. The ashes of the plant told nothing. Only from the house to the plant the tracks of a man; deep-set tracks, as

if the man carried a burden, these—yes, these told everything.

And now you understand. And so will God, for this is the tale that I'll be telling him soon and he'll let me see her, I know.

* * * * *

Yes. Mary. Mary. It won't be long. It's running fast now. How red it is. And what a sweet, sickening smell. Soon, Mary, soon. The stuff drips on the floor. There's a little pool. Yes, I shot one all by myself and I got two bullets into the other. Mary, precious if only I had gone with you. The happiest Christmas we have ever spent.....It's a sweet thing for a woman to hear....the man she lovesYes, God. I....I....Kiss me, Mary....kiss....



The River

By Harold Lewis Cook

IN London, that old city,
When Kings and Queens pass by
There is no crying from the river,
There is no sigh.

And when a beggar mumbles
For pennies in the cold,
Comes no shrill laughter from the river,
And no flung gold.

When women selling hunger
Between the bridges roam,
No radiance rising from the river
Bids them home.

In London, that old city,
The river speaks no word,
But long the people there have wondered
What they heard.



"Mr. and Mrs. Squibb Request the Pleasure—"

By *Charles G. Shaw*

THROUGH the swinging -glass doors of the entrance to the great hotel you trip your way, and removing resplendent top hat, silk muffler and overcoat, check them over the counter of the small room on the right. In return for these portions of apparel you will receive a diminutive bit of pasteboard which you slip into the pocket of your snow-white waist-coat. You then step into the wash-room, where you scowlingly survey your visage in the long looking glass and tighten the knot of your already choking tie. A fishy-eyed, blond youth greets you with a feeble smile and the query: "Think they'll serve any hootch?" while a florid-faced fellow of middle age nods an unenthusiastic welcome.

A few feet further on you find yourself at the foot of the green-carpeted staircase that branches to the right and left. You take the latter turning, and mount with conscious dignity. "—" to the lofty menial of the graven countenance who, in a thick, stentorian tone, bellows: "Mr. —," and you bow simperingly and shake the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Squibb and their terrified little daughter, Felicité, who are ranged in company front at the head of the stairs.

Surrounding them on all sides, pausing to murmur a "hello" here and a "how are you?" there, is a seething, nondescript mass. Some are smoking; some are chatting; all are looking for someone they can't find.

To the left is a rather large alcove

where the punch bowl is located, which is your next point of attack. It if be crowded, you may be certain the news is good; if not, the chances are in favor of lemonade or fruit cup. However, there are cigarettes there and, perhaps, cigars as well. That tall, dark woman with the uneven teeth, who sat next to you during dinner at the Wyncamp's, has already spotted you, and you adroitly dodge behind a potted palm and slip into the ballroom, where the stag line serves as a temporary harbor of safety.

The orchestra is serenely installed among clusters of hot-house flora, on the left, and is playing "So This Is Love" from "Little Miss Bluebeard." Pirouetting couples glide by—youthful couples, middle-aged couples, couples that have danced together since the days of the Schottische—couples that move like the meanderings of a mountain brook, couples that seem to have been born with dancing shoes on their feet. A pale young man inquires if you have anything on your hip.

"I want you to meet a cousin of mine," mumbles the sad-faced individual on your right, "she's an awfully nice girl," and before you have time to make the excuse that you "would love to, later, but just now have to speak to old Mrs. Fitzlister," he has seized you by the arm and steered you into the centre of the room, where he cuts-in upon a plump, reddish-haired maiden to whom he presents you. She forces a sickly smile while her recent partner, mop-

ping his brow, rapidly disappears in the direction of the alcove.

Yes, the floor is so slippery, and isn't it crowded! No, you were not at the Larrabee's tea this afternoon, nor are you going on the Tilson's theatre party next Tuesday. There are so few good plays this winter and you don't care much for Mah-Jong.

Round and round you plod. The perspiration bursts out on your forehead and streams down your cheeks; you feel the stiffness leaving your shirt. Oh, why were you such an idiot to be so easily tricked? Further conversation is out of the question, and you begin to wonder if the misery is ever going to end. Will no one relieve you? Damn that man, anyway, who was responsible!

But just as you have given up all hope, the music ceases. You pull out your handkerchief and mutter vaguely about it being "such a delightful dance." Then you collar some unsuspecting friend, who happens to be passing, introduce him to the girl and, while he is making a platitude about the temperature of the room, escape in the crowd.

A couple of glasses of that red stuff and a cigarette help matters considerably, and you are almost yourself again when Norman Bottsford, a being you have known and avoided for years, hails you. Norman wears a double-breasted waistcoat, and a single pearl in the bosom of his shirt, while an enormous gardenia, just beginning to turn brown, droops from his button-hole. He speaks with a lingering drawl and pauses every once in a while to inquire the time. By trade he is a stock-broker.

"Haven't seen you around much, lately," he observes. "Been—er—away?"

"No," you tell him.

"Think I'll—er—run down to Hot Springs about the middle of—er—the month," he confides. "It agrees with me, and there's—er—always plenty to do there. Getting pretty—er—sick of town. Need a rest. Suppose I—er—

ought to dance a bit. What is the hour, did you say?"

For the fifth time you inform him, and turn away.

Numerous familiar faces punctuate the sea of powdered shoulders and spotless shirt fronts, though there are such a lot you have never even glimpsed before. And so young! You wonder if you are getting ancient. Suddenly there is a lull in the music and the band strikes up the supper march.

The scene instantly becomes one of hopeless confusion. There is a rush from the ballroom and a terrific crowding along the stairs. Everyone begins searching for his supper partner. You have promised to join the Perribeck's at their table and, descending the stairs, you proceed to that section of the establishment where supper is to be served.

After tramping two-thirds of the way around the great oval-shaped room, you ultimately discover several members of your party seated at one of the tables. Beatrice and Henry are also coming, they announce, which raises the total of those to sit at the table to just twice the number intended. However, extra chairs are brought, there is a general wedging in, someone uses someone else's fork, and supper is on.

With a start, you find yourself between a grinning youth and a gawky débutante. There is a grapefruit Suprême and conversation about the season at Palm Beach; there is clear turtle soup and conversation about Millicent Farrowby's engagement; there is squab en compote and conversation about the Glenlockett's divorce; and there is biscuit Tortoni and conversation about week-ends on Long Island, Monday night at the opera, mud baths, silver-tipped cigarettes, double-dummy bridge, prohibition and the Prince of Wales. There may, or there may not, be a bottle or two of rather sweet champagne.

Clatter and racket reign on all sides; waiters rush in every direction; here and there a couple rise and saunter off to dance. Above the constant din an

occasional strain of melody filters in through the heavy portieres. You sip your black coffee and gaze about. Thin, blue wreaths of cigarette smoke fill the air, and here and there a ripple of light laughter breaks the monotonous undercurrent. At every table the talk is astonishingly "small."

"Who's that with the black pearl earrings?" an anaemic-looking woman asks a bored young man who glances wearily in the direction of the indicated female and shakes his head even more wearily.

"Haven't the dimmest idea," he murmurs with a sigh.

You pretend to listen to the débâutante next to you recount her recent experiences while rehearsing for the Blue and Green Fête, to be given on the twenty-eighth of the month, and wonder if the waiter is going to bring anything else to drink. The grinning youth announces that he hasn't been to bed for three entire days, and you invite Maude Perribeck to dance.

This venture proves far more satisfactory than the first, for Maude possesses countless admirers, and you are cut-in upon before you have navigated a dozen steps.

In a corner of the room, fox-trotting with a dinner-jacketed lad, you espy a saucer-eyed flapper with singularly provoking lips, and inquire of seven different men who she may be. Each tells you he has been trying to find out all evening.

A snatch of a one-step with Audrey, a waltz with Ned Warrington's wife, and you begin to doubt the potency of the punch. Thanks, a cigarette is just what you want. Tibbets closes his case with a click and thinks that something fizzy would go well. You readily agree and, with a knowing nod, he seizes you by the arm and escorts you through the supper room (which is being cleaned and swept) into the main lobby and thence, via the elevator, to room 601.

"Gave him half a stroke a hole and beat him one up." The large, red-faced man with the puffy eyes waves an empty wine glass in one hand while, with the

other, he impresses the fact of his athletic prowess by means of symbolic gestures. The air is heavy with smoke and conversation. Around a makeshift bar, at one end, is clustered a group of men ranging anywhere from twenty-two to seventy years of age. They are drinking either champagne or Scotch whisky, which is being ladled out by two white-coated menials at the rate of thirteen drinks a minute. It is the drawing-room of a small suite, engaged for the night by Mr. Squibb who, seated on the edge of a sofa, is endeavoring to fascinate a rather over made-up young woman in black velvet.

Further along you will overhear the fragments of a semi-risqué anecdote being delivered in loud whispers by one youth to another. A faded, almond-eyed woman, whose name you have completely forgotten, smilingly asks for a cigarette.

Yes, you will take champagne. You don't believe in mixing when you can help it. Besides, whisky gives such a breath. There's Willie Hackley in the corner. He's half-pickled and he greets you with a slap on the back.

"Have you heard the one about—" And Tibbets, who has approached, listens in.

You think another of the same will hit the right spot and, accordingly, present your goblet to be replenished. Somewhere in the offing a game of bridge is in progress. Grace Demarest taps you on the shoulder and wants to know if you will dine with her on Thursday at her apartment. The Henderwickes are coming. That last glass was excellent and, enthusiastically, you accept the invitation. Even Norman Bottsford doesn't seem such an appalling jackass. You tell Mrs. Gaines you have never seen her looking so well, and she immediately invites you to the opera. There is more talk about golf and White Sulphur Springs figures prominently. Joe Wakelton, you discover, knows a certain little cutie who lives in West Seventy-third Street, and you have a couple of long ones with

him. Then you decide a dance or two would be "just the thing."

The ballroom is considerably less crowded than it was prior to your visit to the sixth floor, and you cut-in upon the first girl that strikes your gaze, who, incidentally, you have not met. Never in your life have you felt more like dancing and your feet perform all varieties of amazing steps. You actually do most of a waltz with May Fosterseythe, with whom you have utterly nothing in common, nor have spoken to in years; and on and on you twirl.

But before you realize it, the orchestra is playing "Home, Sweet Home," and, glancing at your watch, you learn that it is almost quarter to four. But it doesn't seem late. Moreover, you

have rarely felt so thoroughly "on the crest." The whole idea of going home is too absurd for consideration. And you thrust the thought aside. Fumblingly, you locate the check for your hat and coat, and toss it to the attendant. Home? Certainly not! The thing's out of the question.

"Ever heard of the White Elephant Club?" inquires Norman Bottsford. "Stays open—er—all night, and I know a couple of—er—little blondes there I think you might like. Sure, I've got a card. Er—what do you say?"

And the next thing you know you are in a taxi with Bottsford, being driven to some address in the Fifties. Oh, well! Bottsford isn't such a bad fellow, after all.



What He Had Been Wondering

By Geo. B. Jenkins, Jr.

HER voice came from the general direction of Grant's left shoulder, a voice drowsy with tenderness.

"Never before," she said in a voice of velvet softness, "have I been contented, happy...."

Grant said nothing. Very probably there would be more than this. He would ask her a question later.

"You are so understanding, so sympathetic," she murmured. "I have always been hoping I would find a man I could really care for. I have never met one who interested me for a second...."

That question still stirred in Grant's mind, but he decided to wait a little longer.

"For the first time," she declared, "I am in love! The first time in my life!"

Grant frowned a trifle. He held her in his arms, not yet ready to ask the question that was bothering him.

"I have been waiting all my life for you!" she declared. "I have never cared for anyone else! You are my first love!"

"Pardon me," said Grant, "but I'd like to ask you a question. Has—er—I have been in Europe for the last two years, and—Did your fifth husband get a divorce from you, or were you successful in your suit?"



The Last Days of Lucifer

By David Karsner

I

THIS is the story of a proud one who lived a little before his time and a little behind it. The manner in which he blew rings of smoke indicated what he thought of the world. His philosophy of life seemed to be riveted to the faith that what goes up must come down, but if it doesn't what does it matter? Who cares? His was a gay and crisp spirit not to be darkened or dampened by work or worry. The gravest concerns that afflicted others appeared to him nothing more than an inevitable annoyance that could be avoided by a shrug as one avoids the inevitability of rain by the simple trick of raising an umbrella. His eyes saw nothing gray and to them even a funeral was as funny as a plug hat. He was a born leader like Alexander, and when he was young every broken window within the radius of a mile of where he lived was laid to the piracy of his band, and every missing dog was traced by its anxious owner to his back yard.

My earliest definite impression of Toby—the sobriquet given to him by his gang—was received when I was seven and he was seventeen. I would be going to Sunday School with head drooping like a Christian martyr and he would be standing there under the battered awning over Harvey Chestnut's grocery store with two or three confederates, giving me a condescending smile as he crossed his legs, sat on the fire plug, flecked imaginary dust from his sleeves, tilted his tan fedora another degree, stuck

his thumbs in the armholes of his vest and puffed his cigarette more vigorously than before.

He had put on long trousers by this time and since these were and possibly still are regarded by all boys and girls as the badge of manhood, he gave first assertion in that lofty estate by declining Sabbath observance.

How I envied Toby's bravery and wished that I might leap from my seventh to seventeenth year and acquire the long trousers, the vest and the manly ways! How he could swagger and put on the grand airs about his father being an alderman and making speeches with the grand dukes of political fortune, and how it was that his aunts came to give him a gold watch and chain, which he promptly pawned, and a ring with a green stone in it which he gave to a taffy-headed girl in the Odeon's burlesque chorus. I must say that Toby was no lady's man—not he, who loved to strut up to the bar with his cigarette poised between his fingers like a man-about-town and order whisky like a sailor just back from a temperance port. But then the hardiest of them have fallen for the wisp of a woman's skirts, especially when they're spangled and short and she standing out there all alone in the prismatic glow singing "Don't Send My Boy To Prison, You Know 'Twould Break My Heart." Well, she probably broke Toby's, for things weren't the same with him after that. Not quite. . . .

He didn't seem to brag so much about the prowess of his father, who was now eyes deep in the annual up-

rising of the citizenry crusading in the noble cause of Good Government and an Honest Election. He took things more for granted since three foot lithographs of Hon. William Haggerty were posted on every billboard and back fence in the neighborhood and in the parlor windows of the colored folks up the alleys. Of course, Toby Haggerty still capitalized a little his Governor's prestige in the vicinity, but the merchants didn't seem to mind as long as he kept his graft within reasonable bounds. They knew Bill Haggerty well enough to know where he stood on the paramount issues of the day, and if his son did run up a little bill of three or five dollars here and there, they had the faith that surpasses all understanding that they would be repaid some day one way or another.

II

You see, it was a hot May night and only two weeks before the voters would seal the doom of at least half the aspirants and glorify the remainder. The hall was crowded with whites and blacks, the latter being assigned to the gallery, and a brass band outside was thundering and ripping "Hail Columbia, Happy Land" that must have brought terror to the leaping frogs in Druid Hill Park and silenced the katydids singing in the dark selvedge of the Potomac's peaceful shores. The principal speaker was no less than the Hon. William Haggerty, nominee for Representative in Congress. The smaller fry had spoken and the tepid air was thick with challenge and smoke. The band came in blaring martial music just as the Hon. William Haggerty arose to greet his cheering constituency, and he remained standing thus until the last shrill note had pierced the ceiling. Bill Haggerty had a sense of the dramatic, and he knew the advantage of the spotlight while the band is playing and the people have nothing to look at but you. Still,

Haggerty was something to look at. His young face was smooth and stern, his mouth kindly and it could break into the warmest smile just like he was going to buy you an arm chair or invite you home for dinner.

"My fellow citizens," he began in his clear barytone, "this is no ordinary occasion, this is no casual meeting that brings us here on this mid-summer night. The glorious valleys of this great and godly domain beckon to the children of nature on a night like this to mingle their voices with God's invisible choir, and to admire with reverence the silver-pointed diadem piercing the nocturnal blue of the dome above whose solemn lustre is equaled only by the achievements of this glorious republic. But, my fellow citizens, the Ship of State has broadcast a warning cry, and we, the sons of Maryland, like valiant mariners, shall not stand idly by, our oars at rest, and watch this proud craft go to her doom, scuttled by the most infamous crew that ever sailed the seas."

The hall vibrated with the din of applause and even the dullest black in the gallery could see that Hon. William Haggerty was the man to go to Congress. He stood there like Samson, his arms outstretched, blinded by the ovation and eager to push over the Temple of Oppression, which he said the party now in favor had reared "upon slipping sands." Had the Hon. William Haggerty sat down then he would have been elected and his opponent would not have had enough votes to confound the arithmetical knowledge of his smallest child. But you know how it is at these kind of affairs, and the Hon. William Haggerty was now serenely launched on the sea of oratory to save that sinking Ship of State and bring its treacherous crew to an accounting.

For the remainder of his speech you may consult any Congressional Record for the past thirty years and apply any one of the numerous orations to him, for he has had his

counterpart in lean years and fat. As for Bill Haggerty—the night was hot and the occasion momentous. He wilted under the strain, dropped in his tracks, as it were, just as he reached the parapet of his pearly flight, and they carried his lifeless body that balmy May night to the hearthstone of his widow, who never liked politics anyway. . . .

Toby was in Ohio with Violet of the burlesque chorus, spending on her the money he had managed to scrape together on his father's credit before she quit the week at the Odeon. He had told her wonderful romances of his sire's greatness, of the vast estate the family had at the seashore and how, through the dulcet processes of time and tide, he would one day inherit the entire scenery, over which she would reign like an imperial Du Barry. Now, Violet was no shrinking simp of a girl. She was as hardened to the ways of life as an installment collector and equally cynical. She knew all about the sweetness and light stuff and wasn't impressed. She had been in love once—oh deeply—but never mind that. Violet had weathered the sorrow of that blight after her own code, and that's how it happened she got on the stage. She wasn't the moping kind that hangs out a crepe and laments the past, even if her heart at twenty-two was a mausoleum housing a dozen dead passions.

Violet liked Toby for the witty lies he told her and for the clear blue sparkle in his eye. There was something in him that seemed to remind her of a moonlit path cut through the woodland that ran out and over the hill like a silver fox that no hunter had ever essayed to catch. He brought back to her visions of Tommy Lickens—but we won't go into that. Violet never did. She was inured to the life of the rowdy-dowdy world now, and the woodland paths strewn with silver crystals kicked out of the moon bag and she walking or sitting with Tommy Lick-

ens until the stars dropped out of the sky was only a picture covered with dust hanging on the walls of her memory. . . .

Toby never missed the show when Violet was on the boards. Afternoon and evening he sat right up front and watched the blurred bulb blink three times in its tin green coat hanging over the professor's music stand like a lightning bug in June playing hide and seek in the evergreens with a katydid. He watched the professor look to the right and to the left to see if his musicians were present, and then raise his baton with the shine worn off and dip it deep into the razzle dazzle step. The curtain with "ads" on it telling you where you can borrow money on easy terms, and who the doctor is and where he lives, and the name of the furniture man who will feather your nest on easy payments, rises slowly while the drummer on the far end swats the drum with his hand and clashes the cymbals with his foot. The Hula Hula Girls are dancing, swaying, trotting, forming in twos like a phalanx of lightning bugs going to war. Nietzsche would approve of this show for it is beyond good and evil, and Violet looks down and smiles at Toby just before the professor is all set to let her sing "It's Always Paradise When You're With Me, Baby Mine." Toby gets fidgety and his celluloid collar feels like it is pressing into his neck and choking him. Why doesn't someone open a window?

The curtain comes down with a bang and the boys are running through the audience selling all the songs sung in the show and another is hawking six pictures for a dime that will let you in on the beauty of the feminine form. Toby wishes the show was over for he wants to tell Violet how she is wasting her time and talent with a miserable bunch like this who every now and then have to be silenced by a big bruising bouncer for making cracks about the

Oriental Dancer. There wasn't anything rough about Toby Haggerty. The neighbors had said he was incorrigible, but it was scarcely so. He was as sensitive as a woman about some things, as impetuous as a savage, as impulsive as an artist, as reckless as a pirate, as proud as Lucifer about anything that pertained to him, with the vigor of an athlete and the weakness of a lover.

"It ain't no use, Toby," Violet was saying behind the screen in her room as she put on her flaming kimono. "I'm gonna stick with the show. None of your lovin' nest for mine, and if your Governor's got the biggest house in the world, you couldn't drag me into it with all the Blue Ribbons in his stables. I wouldn't fit in a show like that, don't you see, pretty boy? No, it can't be done, Toby—and you gotta beat it back to the Governor's Mansion and see that the horses are groomed."

She stepped into the middle of the room and stood before him, her head thrown back like a woman who has made a great decision and looking for all the world like that enchanting figure on the tall chromo of a Turkish cigarette. She came closer now and softened almost as she had done with Tommy Lickens of faded memory. She sat on the arm of his chair and whistled the chorus of her "Paradise" song. Toby had not had a chance to make a decision. It had been made for him like all the other decisions that awaited him.

III

WHEN Toby turned up in his old haunts his confederates greeted him with all the ceremony befitting the return of a lost leader. There were things doing and to be done, but Toby was listless and sad. He had thrown for a big gamble and had lost. Violet! Violet!

The fact that he would have to give an accounting for his absence from home had occurred to him as

only one of those inevitable unpleasantries that could be managed by romancing and strategy. He vowed he had been working on a farm the week and quit after a fight with one of the hands, the cause of which he supplied with infinite detail. Mrs. Haggerty doubted the tale in advance, and when she found on Toby's dresser the next morning a full length photograph of a smiling girl in tights and signed: "To Toby Haggerty in remembrance of a week in Ohio, Violet,"—well, you may imagine the reaction of a mother who had forbidden her own daughters to stay out later than ten, and who insisted that when young men called, the light in the parlor must be as bright at their parting as when they came. Toby also learned with dark misgivings of the sudden death of his father. He was cut off now from considerable revenue acquired without working. Also, he admired his father.

The upshot of a family council was that Toby would have to learn trade, quit the association of his pals and become a worthy member of the community. Since he had never worked except two months perforce in a tobacco warehouse, and since his aunts were wont to remove that incentive by supplying him with small sums, it was decided that a reformatory would check his wayward ways and instill in him a regard for the fitness of things. And so it happened. I doubt if any prince or potentate, fallen from lofty grace, ever suffered more the withering humiliation of his soul than did Toby when he passed under those high and forbidding walls with broken bottles smeared on top and heard the wrenching clang of that iron gate behind him. Still, he bore it with anterior fortitude and none ever gleaned from his proud and defiant countenance a longing for kindlier adjustment. He was the wit of the establishment, one of the end-men in the minstrel show on Saturday nights, and a sort of high court of justice in minor disputes

between the casuals of life like himself. . . .

After the death of Bill Haggerty the politicians scurried hither and yon for a sure-fire substitute to put on the ticket. There was a rising young lawyer in the district by the name of Leander Stockton, forty, and "safe" in the meaning of political parlance. Stockton had been minor counsel for the street car company, and he was credited with possessing impregnable knowledge about franchises and the inalienable rights of traction companies. It had never been known that the street car company persuaded him to run for the State Legislature, and elected him, that he might lobby for their interests, or at least assist their plans by blocking obnoxious legislation. Nor was it known, nor did any care, that Stockton drew his salary from the traction interests during the two years that he served the People. Those were dark days, politically speaking, and the muckrakers had yet to sound the clarion call and test the public's conscience. Moreover, Stockton was a close bosom friend of Haggerty's, and what better tribute to the memory of the dead Demosthenes could be contrived than by running for Congress one Leander Stockton? To the Capitol he went and all and sundry were duly happy and contented. . . .

A few years passed and Toby attained his majority, while Representative Stockton was re-elected. Toby had learned the printing trade in the reformatory and a friend of his father's, as a favor to Mrs. Haggerty, had obtained for him a position as compositor on one of the city's most influential newspapers. It was no use. Toby hated work. When it was not dull it was silly. While he set type he would be thinking of that week with Violet in Ohio, her "Paradise" song and he sitting there in the front row feasting his eye upon what he thought was her beauty, and the nights after the show walking with a

Real Actress who liked him and occasionally looked at him in a way that made Toby want to pull the stars out of the blue and stick them in her yellow hair. Gosh! He set the type upside down, pied the lines and mixed things up generally. The foreman fired him, and Toby was glad of it as it gave him an alibi to present to his mother whose waning strength and the care of her other children could no longer combat the wilfulness of this errant lad. He must shift for himself, and with sad heart she ordered him hence, whither she did not know, nor did he.

Hunger forced Toby now and then to turn his hand to odd jobs, but he always made sure they should not be of the enduring sort. He had a way of quitting a task in the midst of its execution, as for example when he got a job driving cattle from one pen to another in the local stockyards. One day Toby was ordered to drive fifteen steers from the stockyards to an abattoir half a mile away. He would have to herd his cattle through a section of streets and midway to the abattoir the notion struck him that he didn't want that kind of job, it was undignified to be seen importuning steers through one's home town, and he abandoned them. It was no concern of his that they ran through the city, scarifying children, disarranging traffic and suddenly turning the police force into cowboys and the city into a ranch. It was that way with him.

Almost every afternoon he sunned himself in a little park, and I can see him yet with memory's eye surrounded by little boys and girls and telling them the wildest tales of his adventures with bears and lions in the Rockies, of how he saved a baby playing around her mountain home from an eagle that swirled about the cliff by shooting it with a pistol given to him by Admiral Dewey for his valor in Cuba. He loved to weave these romances about himself, and the larger the audience the more thrilling

the tale. These were no retailed fairy yarns either, but strong stuff in which men played their parts befitting soldiers of fortune and every girl was a Joan of Arc. Toby was extremely chivalrous to women and in his mind he set each one by the standard of Violet who, if not a paragon possessing all the virtues and none of the vices of her sex, was a good sport after her code and his, and was no shrinking simp of a girl.

IV

INTERMINABLE months were compressed into a few short years during which I wandered far into the little known niches of our land in quest of the unknowable, returning at length to my native scenery where Toby was still holding forth quite the same as I had left him—still the whimsical troubadour of the trottoirs with his harmonica in his patched pocket clogged with tobacco crumbs, his clownish dance often executed for the amusement of children or bar-flies swarming around a bottle on the sloppy counter of some dingy saloon. Doubtless you have seen the likes of him in your own community. Is there one without his prototype? He could sing a little, too, in the key of a bar-room tenor, and I have seen strong men with hair on the backs of their hands weep copiously as the last note of his rendition of "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls" floated through the murky atmosphere of the interior, cleansing it, it seemed, causing darklings of the night to turn their blurred thoughts to old dreams blown out by the short circuits of chance. Oh, it would wring your heart the way he could put the tremor into those sentimental ballads which he invariably concluded by shamelessly passing his hat, not like a whimpering beggar, but in the manner of one whose sense of humor and approach entitles him to remuneration.

Still, his face and figure were be-

ginning to show sad evidence of exposure and abuse. His years in the reformatory had left their scars in his memory, and these had been joined by additional ones of innumerable arrests and detentions for minor infractions—"drunk and disorderly," "vagrancy," etc., etc.,—mischief of the kind that clutters up every police blotter and affords the magistrates an opportunity to deliver solemn lectures on uprightness and honor. You see, had Toby been born, say, two or three hundred years ago, he might have been a sort of assistant clown in the court of a king, or had his coming been postponed for a similar period his merry heart and lawless laughter might have found happier auspices.

His two aunts—may they be blessed here and hereafter for the kindly, if misguided, impulses of their tender hearts—more than one night trekked their way to the police station to pay his fine, led him to a furnished room, the rent for which they would pay a month in advance, and leave him with enough money to eat for a week or so, harboring the truant hope that he would "do better," as they put it. They were not out of sight before Toby would go out of the room, maybe in the thin silence of a winter's dawn, and hunt up one, two or three of his cronies who he knew were without shelter and proudly steer them to his hall room castle. With the day he would blow in every cent on steaks, French fried tobacco and a bottle for the crew, and in those fitful and intermittent moments of generosity he was a royal host, breaking bread with rummies not half so clever as himself and remarking half reverently that "the hens have been around again and laid another golden egg." . . .

Chance, at this time, was wickedly indifferent to what I thought were my talents and ways in which I hoped to apply them, and to be a waiter in a one-armed restaurant most assuredly was not in my calculations. Even

so. When I told Toby I had secured what to me was good fortune, he grew dark and scornful.

"Look at me," he challenged. "I never work and I never will, and I eat every day and manage a flop at night." The argument was conclusive enough. I was ashamed of myself. It seemed so easy to drift along after his fashion, to make no decisions, to commit no overt act such as getting a job in the face of the inexorable stream of things. Still,—life was considerably newer to me then than it is now, and when I mentioned I had a place in a restaurant his face beamed like a rainbow after a shower.

"Now you're talking! That's the very thing. Where is it? I'll give you a call. Holy crime; I've been wishing some of you stiffs would get a job in a restaurant so I could eat like a gentleman."

Imagine the effrontery of this ebullient scamp!

As usual, he overplayed his hand-out, for on my third night at that never-closed one-arm joint Toby paid his third visit, having increased the number of his accompanying confederates from three on the first night to thirteen on the third—as motley and as cheerful an assortment of nocturnal prowlers as ever raided a pie counter. This was a link in a chain of similar establishments in that city and elsewhere, and the night superintendent, or something, in the course of his rounds of inspection came upon the scene of thirteen fantastic fellows lined up in chairs devouring the delectable dishes before them and caring not one whit as to the financial status of the concern upon whose bounty they had imposed themselves. The superintendent threw a fishy eye at me.

The one of authority, patently stalling for time when he would shower his vinegared wrath upon his unwanted patrons, walked abruptly around the marble counter, and rang up "No Sale" on the cash register. He handed me a five-dollar bill—my

week's wages—in a most unfriendly and threatening manner and expressed his disgust in shocking language. The crew, or most of them, had already filed out, scenting danger, and was conversing on the curb on topics that bore no relation to my embarrassment.

"It's all right," Toby was saying to me commiseratingly, "you'll run into a lot of stiffs like that guy. But honest, I'm terribly sorry you got bounced. Gosh amighty, if only you coulda kept it a little longer."

There was Jimmy Dunn, proprietor of one of the meanest little saloons in the West End. His place was up an alley called Tulip Lane—mark the name!—and was the scene of innumerable cutting scrapes between negro patrons. I suppose Toby and his gang picked it as a sort of headquarters because of its isolation.

Jimmy Dunn had been a race track tout, promoter of third-rate bouts, ran a pool room once, and convinced a jury that he killed a man in a bar-room brawl in self-defense. He had a cauliflower ear, blue eyes and a broken nose, hands that could cover a dinner plate, patent leather shoes, salt and pepper suit and a diamond pin stuck in his shirt front just below his bat wing tie. You know the kind. Toby's gang had been imposing on his dour nature, hanging around without buying and drinking without paying. Jimmy Dunn had had enough of it. He issued a solemn warning that not another drink should quench the thirst of any of them without delivery in kind. Is that so? they said. Very well then, they would give him something to be sore about. When all were sober the plot was hatched and when Toby was bibulous it was consummated. He scrawled the name of Jimmy Dunn on a check for five dollars with which they intended to buy rum up to that amount at Dunn's place just to show him they were men of affairs. In due time what was meant as a practical joke of revenge against

Jimmy became a grave effront to the State—the People, and the wheels of the Law turned swiftly. Toby, the goat, was trapped and awaiting trial. . . .

Comes a day in September, and Toby Haggerty in manacles smiles his way into the courtroom between two huskies. A heavy walnut door with a shining knob opens and the Judge—Leander Stockton—formerly Representative in Congress, steps briskly to the bench. All scramble to their feet while the clerk in a sing-song monotone announces the assembling of the Law and the presence of its Oracle. Toby scrutinizes the Judge and turns away his head toward the open window framed in heavy blue drapes caught with silken ropes with golden tassels. He smiles knowingly.

"Pipe the Judge," says Toby to one of the huskies beside him.

"My Governor's bosom friend," says Toby. "He rode to Congress on my father's hearse." The husky is annoyed by the familiarity and grunts his displeasure. "That's right," Toby persists. "It's ten years ago. Why, the Judge has eaten enough at my house to feed a stable. He and my Governor were as thick as thieves, as the old ladies say."

The husky didn't believe a word of it.

Behind Toby sits Jimmy Dunn, complainant and chief witness for the People. Next him sits a teller of the bank who flagged the five-dollar check. Two policemen of the West End will testify that Toby Haggerty never works, has no visible means of support and has been arrested many times before. Two elderly women, scared half to death, sit on the last seat in the last row near an open window. Their lips move as though framing a ritual. They want to talk, or cry or something. They want to tell the Judge that Toby is a good boy at heart, that he will "do better" if given another chance. Toby turns his head toward them and nods.

Something hurts him inside, and for a moment his proud head droops a little forward. The People won't want to hear the two aunts. They know nothing that is germane to this case. The People are not interested in their feelings. They bring nothing relevant. This is a Court, not a prayer meeting. Judge Stockton will administer the Law. It is the preacher's business to proffer salvation. Let all play their own parts according to their lights.

Each in his way in this Court has played his part. It is the exact drama. None has usurped the stage. They come upon it and depart with perfect rhythm. There is no hemming and hawing here, and at the end of the day Twelve Men through their spokesman announce the guilt of Toby Haggerty as charged in the indictment, which is forgery of a five-dollar check. Toby keeps up the grand front and his two aunts creep out of the Court biting their lips until they are blue like wraiths caught in a storm. Toby's attorney, appointed by the Court to defend him, departs without so much as a handshake. He knew his part and played it. There will be no appeal or motions for stay of sentence on this or that account.

"Glenn Haggerty," commands the Judge, "stand up!"

Toby rises and bows a little wagishly. The Judge fastens an Arctic eye upon him. His white hair glitters silver in the lamp glow at the end of the bench.

His pause is like that of an ice floe poised for a dive into the frozen sea.

"Glenn Haggerty, you have been found guilty of the charge of forgery—a most serious crime, one that offends not only the Law but the institutions out of which the Law is fabricated. Testimony has been presented to the Court of a nature that convinces me of your unworthiness, of your wilful indolence, that you possess qualities that are the reverse of admirable, that you are a waster,

and erring son of a good mother and an illustrious father.

"Glenn Haggerty, I can conceive of no better way in which I might serve the memory of your father than by causing his son to be detained for the period of three years in State's Prison on the charge contained in the indictment, which is forgery, and it is the earnest hope of the Court that during your incarceration you will meditate upon your errors and resolve that upon your issuance from State's Prison you will be a better man." There is a pause. The Judge is not through. "I am very sorry. Very sorry, indeed."

"Oh, that's all right, Judge," says Toby from the dock. "The best of friends must part."

V

TIME is more fleet-footed than sure when the leaves of youth are green with promise and there are dreams to be captured and things to be done. It was that way with me. Time squats like a blind and solemn beggar upon the hearth of those who must wait, and waiting strive to wrest from their cooling memories one jet of sustaining flame. It was that way with Toby, beating the tired wings of his imagination against granite walls like an imprisoned bird. For three years it was thus with him. I think of a scampering mouse nibbling its freedom through the labyrinth of my walls, and of Leo, that majestic lion in Central Park, in whose flaming eyes I have seen the living embers of conquest and poignant memories upon which he seemed to slake the thirst of his spirit, oblivious of the bars that made him a captive stranger among his pigmy keepers. Toby developed the furtive, fearsome qualities of the little mouse in my walls, content to push one long day after another into the yesterdays, like grains of sand dropping into an abyss. Also, he was like the lion at Central Park who envisages not the confines of its cage, but the sweep and scope

of a larger world where the air is perfumed with the smell of earthy things and Chance is neutral.

Things had happened to him and to me in the five years that followed. I had all but forgotten him. Life is that way with us when each is bent upon his own task. I had closed many doors in turning toward others. Not so with Toby. He was not pestered by the urge of "getting on." It was Sunday afternoon in a neighboring city and I had been strolling with a girl who thought she loved me, and I capitalized her thought by boasting of my skill as a reporter, of the things I had seen and described, of the tremendous import of local political happenings, and the beauty and color in the flash and current of life that whirled about my pencil, so busy in those halcyon days of sweet illusion.

A telegram from the superintendent of the County House in Toby's town brought me back sharply to the scenes of my vagrant days and to his. He was dying. Would I come at once? The prison had done for him. He took from its cells the germs of disease that destroyed him in two years after he left, germs that brought crimson to his cheeks, hollowed his chest, stooped his shoulders, clogged his throat with coughing, and threw him prostrate into the street on a winter night like a bag of refuse. In such fashion he was found and sent to the County House to die.

"It's good of you to come," he said weakly as I drew up a chair by his cot.

"But why didn't you let me know before?" I protested.

"Well, when I came in here I gave 'em a fake name," he replied. "I didn't want the name of Haggerty on the register of this hotel. Maybe you won't understand it, Kid, but I felt disgraced in coming to the Poor House. You see, I didn't mind it when I was doing the 'bit' over the hill. Lots of successes go to the 'pen,' but only the failures come here."

This was the condemned ward and there were seven other men in it—all to die in the immediate.

"When they told me I was sure enough going to croak, I thought I'd better let you know. I don't mind dying—I've seen it all—but it ain't nice to croak alone. See my shoes down there under the bed?" he pointed feebly. "I won't let the nurse take them away. I'm going to get in those shoes and walk out of this place sooner than they think."

Yet, he knew he was among the condemned. His ward-mates coughed and turned restlessly in their beds. I told him I would come to see him every day.

"Can you let me have a dollar, Kid?" he asked. The old Toby. He folded the bill into a little knot and stuck it under his pillow. The next day he chatted until his strength ebbed visibly, and at my parting he slyly asked if I could let him have two dollars. These he stuck under his pillow as before. As I was about to leave him on the third day, he said:

"Kid, come tomorrow by three o'clock. And will you stop in a drug store and buy ten cents worth of lemon drops for that Wop in the corner? He's got a grave-yard cough, and no one ever comes to see him, and he never gets nothing because they can't understand his lingo."

As I prepared to go, the nurse came in to take his temperature. She appeared so young and gentle. The uncouth ways of some of these casuals had not hardened her.

"You're looking much better today, Mr. Haggerty," she pretended, putting her cool hand against his hot brow. "He is so gentle and kind," she remarked as we passed into the corridors where other wrecks were sitting about in wheel chairs, or shuffling with the aid of canes.

My mind crowded with thoughts of him, I forgot the lemon drops until the trolley let me off at the entrance of the gloomy building on the fringe of the city. I reconnoitered until I

got them, and when I entered the dismal chamber a white screen was around his bed and seven men had turned their faces from it, and there was silence save for the ruckle in his throat.

Pat McGinty in the bed next to Toby's, called me over to him.

"Say," he says in an awe-struck whisper, "have you been givin' him money?" Pat shifted his eyes toward Toby who didn't hear.

"A little," I said.

"Well, he's been blowin' it all in. Orderin' fruit and candy and tobacco from the stores here, and passin' it aroun', and tippin' the barber for all of us, and the other day sent out for a German paper for Fritz over there who can't read English, and bought the nurse a bunch of violets." Toby!

"He says to me just this mornin'," continued Pat, raising himself on one elbow, "'Pat,' he says, 'this is a hell of a place for Lucifer to die in, ain't it?' And I says he was right—and then he laughs out loud and says he'll do a clog when he meets Saint Peter on the pearly stairs and—well, I guess you know how he was—always laughin' and jokin' and makin' the best of everything." . . . Yes, I did know.

"You know," says Pat, "the nurse took quite a shine to him. She was always comin' in and fussin' around him and fixin' things and bringin' him water without his askin' for it. He called her Little Violet and I guess he was thinkin' about that when he sent out and bought the bunch of 'em for her. Sure, and no kiddin', we'd almost had a weddin' march if things had kept up the way they was goin'."

"Oh, I guess it wasn't as serious as all that," I laughed.

"Well, you can't tell," says Pat, "I'll bet the nurse is cut up about his leavin'."

I delivered the lemon drops to the Italian by the window. His pinched face almost hidden by his walrus moustaches lit up with gratitude. I

told him they were the gift of him who lay behind the screen.

"Sucha gooda man! He maka da fun all da time. He never glum. Fina man!"

The nurse came to the door and beckoned me. Doubtless she thought I was one to whom she could speak quite frankly about such matters. Her eyes were candid, her mouth firm like one of good breeding.

"You know," she began a little hesitant, "Mr. Haggerty did not tell us his right name until about a week ago, else we would have let you know." I said I understood, and remarked something in his favor.

"His nature was so sweet and wild," said the nurse, "I liked him for that. He was patient and gentle, too. I wanted to give him something that meant very much to me, so—it must have been a few weeks ago—I asked him if he would wear my Crucifix. I didn't know his beliefs, I didn't think he had any by the way he talked sometimes. But then most of them feign to laugh at destiny in here. But it didn't matter to me—if it doesn't matter to you—he was so good and clean."

She ran her fingers up and down the seam of her white frock and seemed to lose for a second the fine

poise I had at first observed in her. The ruckle in his throat behind the white screen smote our ears and we looked at each other and I thought I saw—but that does not matter when a man is dying.

"What did he say when you asked him to wear your Crucifix?" I asked.

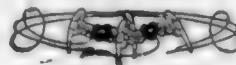
"He laughed as usual, and pressed my fingers and said, 'All right, Little Violet, if it makes you happy, slap it on.'"

"Then that verdict stands," I promised. I could see she was happy in what she thought was her triumph over him. She must have cared a lot.

The day, like Toby, passed into the fugitive twilight. . . . *

There is a fadeless picture for me of seven silent men, each contending against the sombre spirit within him, each wanting to be brave and look over in the corner at Toby's vacant bed—and each afraid—and I summon Shakespeare to explain it, maybe:

"Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world."



Earth

By Mabel Simpson

*WE all come back to her again,
Certain as seasons and the rain.*

*Though drinking deep from other streams,
Though wandering in other dreams,*

*We all come back to her again,
Certain as seasons and the rain.*



The Liebeslied of Abigail Bronk

By John Mosher

I

THINKING of the many openings for librarians and of the splendid work it was to be one, Miss Bronk rounded a corner and ran into a young man with bare knees and a feather in his cap. She murmured an apology, forgetting he probably knew no English, and hurried on down the path. But her vision of a kindly figure in the act of recommending a wholesome novel or a volume of worth-while memoirs faded irrevocably. In its place appeared the same figure, no longer kindly or smiling, but struggling in a lonely ravine with a heavy shouldered Tyrolean mountaineer.

It was no great distance to the highway, but Miss Bronk did not feel quite secure (especially as she noted in a hasty glance back that the young man was still standing and staring at her) until she met a troupe of nuns, their coifs bright in the sunlight, pitchforks and scythes over their shoulders, coming in from the hayfields.

In the village street of little plaster houses painted so daintily with pink and blue Virgins and birds-of-paradise, the picture of the distraught lady assaulted by the brute seemed uncalled for. ". . . But then he might have been drinking," Miss Bronk argued.

By the time she came to her favorite well, with the statue of St. Christopher above, she saw herself as fresh from an encounter with a drunken man. In which she had behaved with great tact and self-command. Resting on the broad ledge of the well she stared up at the bland St. Christopher with that

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plump-cheeked child on his shoulder who had lisped: "Marvel not, for with me hast thou borne the sins of the whole world."

"A single woman is so conspicuous in a village like this," Miss Bronk remarked to the image. "I'll be just as glad when Leila gets here. Not that I am unable to take care of myself, and the trip down here from Paris was really very simple, though I did have to spend the night on the cars. But the villagers must think it very strange that I should come alone to such a remote little place. They don't know that my friends were just delayed by business, and that we Americans are very independent and don't alter our plans just because our friends must."

She wished that some way or other the villagers might understand how it had come about that Leila and Jim had had to postpone their trip, and how Leila had been unable to see any reason why Miss Bronk should not go on alone. At the same time they might as well know that she was secretary of the Newburyport branch of the D. A. R., and that the Bronks had been a prop of the community ever since stockade days.

It was a comfort to find a letter for her at the Gasthof in Leila's prima donna script. From Zürich! How like Leila to stop off at Zürich! She fluttered from city to city in Europe as she did from counter to counter in a shop.

"Abby darling."

The letter was a long one, and Miss Bronk settled in a chair.

"Abby darling, you musn't misunderstand . . . if every one of your letters didn't show

you didn't mind it a bit wandering around by your lonesome, I shouldn't think of it a minute. But who do you suppose we ran flat into, here in Zurich? The Allenby-Marches. General A. M., you know! She's so sweet. Not the English dowdy at all. . . . They've invited us to do the lakes in their car—a stunning thing, grey and silver. It's sort of pathetic, isn't it, the way these English grab on to us Americans? We kind of cheer them up, I guess. . . . You've been by yourself so much that I don't believe anyway you want us one bit. Be sure and join us in Rome in the fall. I won't let the officers hurt you. They're so handsome. But bad. Really they're so bad. With your New England conscience you couldn't stand them a minute. . . . Oh, Rome is sweet. Imst sounds dear. Though all that suffering and starving around. I always notice a thing like that right off. It depresses me. . . . There's Jim shouting now. You're so lucky not to have a man always nagging at your heels. Love from us both, Leila."

The letter fell from Miss Bronk's hands. A mist clouded the glasses she wore for reading, and she took them off and put them back in their case. And then she sat there until the shadows reminded her that she must dress for supper. She would go to her solitary table, and tell the Herr Direktor that she would be alone for the rest of her stay, that her friends were not coming. How long this stay might be depended only upon herself now. If she left, went somewhere else, it would not after all be very different; sitting alone at some other little table, with the place trimly set for one person, in some other restaurant, where everyone would treat her quite as courteously, no more intimately than they did here.

Certainly she would not join Leila in Rome. She pondered on Leila's life, wondering how any woman could live as she did, tearing about, first with one party and then with another. All the friends Leila had! Wherever she went new people popped up. Not that Leila was beautiful or clever, or in any way extraordinary. "It is a sort of gift," theorized Miss Bronk. . . . "and she has no discrimination. Certainly no discrimination. No woman with discrimination would have married Jim. . . . Girls marry so young. I really

should be grateful to papa's illness for keeping me busy during those silly years."

Before dressing she wrote a note to Leila:

"Dear Leila, I know it fits your plans better to go on with the Allenby-Marches, and I hope you have the best time in the world. Don't worry about me. As you say, I don't mind a bit being alone. Imst is charming, and everybody very anxious to do everything they can to make me comfortable. I don't know about Italy in the fall. The librarian course begins in September, and I may go home for that. Have a good time, dear, as ever, Abigail."

For supper she put on a gay flowered affair she had picked up in Paris. The clothes in Paris had quite overcome her, and she had been reckless. Her things had always been serviceable, and she had been in mourning since she was eighteen. "I've never had pretty things," she had said to Leila, "and now I don't see why I shouldn't." Perhaps it was the way the neck would slip a daring trifle off the shoulder, that made even a mere house-dress so irrefutably Parisian. "I know, I know," Leila had answered, staring at Miss Bronk's sharp shoulder blade, "but go slow, Abby, go slow." Jim had developed the common streak in Leila.

All the guests in the dining-room bowed to the dignified American lady; and Rosa, the little waitress, ran to fill her tumbler with water, which she was known to prefer to beer. Herr Direktor Rossner, beaming and rubbing his hands, came to her table, and hoped she had had a pleasant walk this afternoon. The rain was over. There would be no more rain that season; he had a definite conviction on the matter.

"My friends are not coming." She must cancel their reservations.

Herr Rossner's beam blurred. "But you? You remain, Miss Bronk?"

"My plans do not depend on theirs," she assured him at once. "I am as yet undecided what I shall do."

The trip away seemed so formidable. She would have to go sometime, certainly, but she must rest first, "work

up her nerve" for it. It didn't matter what the people in Imst thought, even that she had merely invented the story of friends about to arrive. She understood how one would contrive some such legend as a sort of moral support. So many people were never alone, were always moving about in groups of acquaintances (Leila, for instance) that they must regard a solitary individual as curious, abnormal in some way.

II

BUT the sunlight next day defied such moods. The morning shone on the steep street littered with babies and puppies, and on Christ crucified on every hummock. No other place in the Alps could be so beautiful. The green valley, the mountains night-capped with snow, heavy masculine mountains with night-caps disheveled and rumpled—dissipated! Miss Bronk hastily dropped the idea. . . .

"You have this lost?" The words broke so suddenly upon her that they swung her bodily about. She had not heard the approaching steps, so deep had been her absorption.

"You have this lost, Fräulein?"

It was the young man of yesterday's encounter. He stood before her in the village street, and it came upon her that it was not terrifying to meet him here, that he was no spectre of the ravine. She became aware that he was holding out something to her. Her handkerchief! She must have dropped it. That was why he had stopped, and looked after her. All at once she felt very mortified, as though it were something much more personal than a handkerchief which she had dropped.

"Thank you," she managed, changing it suddenly to "Danke-schön."

But he had addressed her in English. Certainly he had said in English: "You have this lost?" He spoke English.

"You speak English?"

"Ein bittel. I learn from the soldiers who come after the war. I have no

one to speak it. I forget. Some day I go to America."

He faltered, stammered. This long speech had wrung out his courage; and Miss Bronk suddenly saw that he was embarrassed, overcome at his own audacity; and at once she felt assured and composed. Adjusting the parasol on her shoulder she smiled her kindest smile, the library smile ("... you will enjoy the sentiment")—

"You are going to America?" She was wondering how she could have been so mistaken in the young man as to make a bogey out of him.

"Aber Ich habe kein Geld. I must eine millionen Kronen haben to go to America."

Miss Bronk calculated. Easily a million!

"Yes," she nodded, "Ja. Das ist nicht zu viel." It was a pleasure to be able to use that phrase from her collection.

"No good for me here," he continued. "Much work! No money! In America, much money! All the money in the world in America!"

It put her to shame, the ease with which he spoke English. Her knowledge of his own tongue was so limited that at the moment all she could remember was that line she had learned in school: "Du bist wie eine Blume, so hold und schön und rein." Obviously it was of no use at the moment, yet she could not get it out of her head. ". . . Du bist wie eine Blume. . . ."

He was saying that there were no ways by which he could make extra money.

"It is a prison here, Fräulein. It is work all day, and no money. I grow old here, and some day I fall on the mountains dead, and they place a little cross there: 'Hier starb Josef Cundenow.'"

Those little crosses! She had seen them so often and wondered at what unlikely places men chose to die. Now she understood how weary and frustrated they fell, not caring that the goats should crop the thin white flowers

growing on their graves, goats rambling down the mountains, goats with their dishonest, foiled faces, the eyes of those who lie and do not profit by their lies. . . .

"But you speak English so well. . . . If I could speak German. . . ."

The next moment she had asked him to give her lessons. Actually, without any forethought, she had asked this young man to teach her his language! She was amazed at herself. She had not planned to study German. But why shouldn't she? With her elementary training she could soon make some definite progress. It would be an advantage in her library work.

Josef hesitated, and seeing that, she repeated her request, and suggested even that as she had no sitting-room at the hotel, they might meet out-of-doors somewhere—where they had first met, perhaps. After his work in the fields he could spare an hour, or half an hour, could he not? . . . Before they parted, it was arranged—all except the money. But she would see that he was not disappointed. They would meet that afternoon for the first lesson. . . .

Miss Bronk went on to the church and stared at the frescoes, and at a memorial to men who had died in the war, which seemed strange with its German names. But it moved her almost to tears. The cost of the war, the terrible cost of the war, the men, the young men it had broken, and had slaughtered, young men with strength and with aspiration, striving to earn enough money to go to America, where there was freedom for them and hope. She rebuked herself for her narrow partizanship during the war itself, how she had forgotten that German boys and Austrian boys, many of them, must have nourished the highest idealism. If she learned nothing else, she reflected, from her trip she would never forget this fact. Travel broadened one's outlook.

On her way to the Gasthof she bought a postal for Leila, and wrote upon it: "Imst is the dearest little place

in the world, A." But she did not send it. No, she did not want Leila to suspect there was something especially entrancing about Imst which she must not miss. Miss Bronk felt she could do as well without Leila for the present. Perhaps she was not being strictly honest with Leila. She was a little guilty about it as though she were indeed deceiving her. But she tore up the postal; it amounted in her mind to a subterfuge, the first in her life.

III

ALTHOUGH Josef arrived the same moment she did, he apologized for being late. He was shy at first, and she even had to urge him to sit on a corner of the rug she had brought. She didn't want him to catch cold, and from a brief nursing course she had taken during the war, she knew that these strong young men were susceptible to pneumonia. Possibly he did not take the best care of himself.

She hadn't forgotten her little dictionary: German-English, English-German, and to begin with, to break the ice as it were, they looked up a number of words: Glen: *enges-Tal*, Bergshlucht—Work: *Arbeit*—Gemütlich: jolly—amusing.

"*Es ist sehr gemütlich hier*," he explained by way of illustration.

"*Schr gemütlich*," she agreed gravely, making progress.

She complimented him on his fluency, and sighed over her own obtuseness. But she had not had his advantage of association with foreigners, even though they had happened to be conquerors.

She had planned to avoid the delicate subject of the war altogether, but Josef wanted to tell her how he made money from the English during the time of the occupation. He had collected all the pipes in the locality with "*Gott Strafe England*" painted on the bowls, and sold them to the officers for souvenirs.

"It gives you quite a new point

of view," thought Miss Bronk.

Her interest encouraged him to contribute more details of his life.

"Mama drink schnapps," he said, "mama schpin. . . ."

She thought of this later that night. What a handicap for a young man, an aged mother who drank schnapps till she spun!

"I don't suppose he has ever known the refining influences of a womanly woman's companionship," Miss Bronk concluded. She thought of these mountain girls who wore three pairs of woolen stockings, the third rolled down over the top of big hob-nailed boots, and who worked in the fields like the men.

"The Mädchen here," he told her a day or two later, as though in answer to this very speculation of hers, "they carry the sheep on their backs over the mountain."

It was so obvious that one side of his nature had never been developed; and that his nature had such a "side" she had no doubt. He had had no opportunities. It was tragic, for he desired them. Did he not by his very eagerness for better things prove himself worthy of them, superior to his companions who were content?

His interest in America was insatiable. It drove syntax and vocabulary out of their hours on the hillside.

"Is it not true, Fraulein, that in America a poor man can make himself rich?"

"I am sure, Josef, that in America you could do fine things. We need men like you in America."

"Need me in America?"

He stared at her, and she had to repeat the words, and insist that she meant them. Was it more than true? If by some miracle he could be transplanted to America to what fine purpose might not this vigor and youth and yearning be employed? How many young men from this older world had achieved the highest place in America, had contributed much to its building! . . .

One day he brought her a bouquet

of the first edelweiss of the season. It had been difficult to find, hazardous to pluck, on the loftiest, shelving heights of the mountains; and he told her somewhat of how he had clambered for the grey velvety flowers. Later gazing up at the jagged peaks she shuddered to think of the risk he had taken, and she saw him clinging to precipitous slants, his strong legs stretched in their sockets, and the big hands clutching into the earth about the roots of sparse plants that grew in that high thin air. It made her quite sick to think of the danger he had run and she begged him not to venture in such places again, but she cherished the edelweiss.

* * * *

"To lend: *leihen, schenken, widmen.*" She looked up the words in the dictionary one evening.

"I will lend you enough money to go to America, Josef—Ich wollte, Josef, dir — Ihnen — genug Geld — leihen — schenken — widmen — um — nach — Amerika — zu — gehen."

She contrived the sentence, and it drove from her thoughts the soft rhythm of that other sentence, "*Du bist wie eine Blume—. . .*"

"Is it not my duty?" she reflected. All those Bronks, generations of them, had they not done all in their ability to make their country what it is today? In the building of this land had they not had their part? It was the tradition of her family to grasp every opportunity to contribute to the nation's welfare.

There might, she pondered, be a reason in all this chain of events which had brought her alone to this remote foreign village, which had led her to stroll idly in that glen, which had tossed her handkerchief on the ground at the critical moment. The idea made life all at once momentous. It absorbed her to the exclusion of all considerations, and when she received a postal from St. Moritz ("Not the season but lovely. Resting. Write direct. L.") she felt it an imposition to have to reply: "Still here, plans undecided, A."

An answer to this arrived with sur-

prising promptness, and annoyed her. "Abby, what are you doing down there?" to which Jim had added a postscript typical of his humor: "Who is he, Abby? Come on, own up to papa."

IV

WHAT little time she had for anything beside her great preoccupation gave her some perplexity. It appeared presently that she had offended one of the other guests at the hotel, a German lady, wife of a professor, evidently something of a personage. She had been very cordial to Miss Bronk, stopping in the corridors to chat in her broken English, swooping over the tables to bow when she entered the dining-room. Suddenly all this ceased. She became very cold, hardly speaking to Miss Bronk in the corridors and not seeing her at all when she entered the dining-room. Miss Bronk knew that in a foreign country one might overlook some of the conventional observances. She racked her memory in vain for any chance slight, and at last decided not to worry about it; she was only sorry if she had hurt the professor's wife's feelings.

Herr Rossner too, she concluded, she definitely disliked, if one could be said to dislike the proprietor of the hotel where one happened to be.

"Miss Bronk enjoys our little valley," he would say, "I see! I see! It is far from home, and one is free. One can do as one likes. Yes—yes, Miss Bronk."

What did he mean by that? His manner seemed a little ironic.

But she had no time for such trivial considerations. There was the problem of Josef's mother, this whirligig of a mother. Must she go, too, to spin in America? "Sharper than a serpent's tooth—" But Miss Bronk had not been a thankless child. Far from it. She could speak as one who had to the last extremity fulfilled her filial obligations, and her decision now decreed that this eager, capable young man should have

every beautiful chance on earth. Every beautiful chance! The thought of it made the dusty print of the dictionary swim before her, scrawled across it, divinely scrawled, the promise of a great man bringing peace to the world, an end of wars, succor to a straitened people. All at once Imst seemed a different Imst, an important Imst, as important as Eisleben where Luther was born, as the Kentucky farm where Lincoln was born.

"If someone should arrange, Josef, to send you to America, would you be able to go?" This was the nearest she had yet come to the project so mastering her.

As she said it, it occurred to her that there might be other ties, ties he had not spoken of, and she recollects how little she really knew about him. But he reassured her.

"Oh, Fräulein, I go and I have money and become *ein Herr President — ein Herr President Graf von Coudenov!*"

"His aims are instinctively for the highest," she reflected with pleasure. She went back to the hotel happy, wondering only why she had not at once declared her intentions to him. There was a letter this time for her, from Leila, which she just remembered to read before entering the dining-room. Then she re-read it:

"Dearest Abby, I don't believe we shall go much further with the Allenby-Marches. I haven't said a thing to Jim yet, but really I'm not crazy about them. There is something about Eleanor Allenby-March I can't like. I feel so sorry for the general. Some of the people she knows! It's my opinion she needs some respectable friends."

"So we may come to Imst after all. I am sure it's lovely there, and that you're having the time of your life. You sly puss. Love, as ever, Leila."

"P. S.—I wish we had gone to Imst in the first place."

"P. S.—When people invite you on an automobile trip in their car would you expect to pay for the gas? L"

Would Leila want to take German lessons too? Miss Bronk was convinced she would. Leila would instantly be

impressed with the absolute necessity of improving her languages. She would bring her dictionary, and join the sessions on the hillside. Miss Bronk saw her perched on a corner of the rug, her pink parasol ballooning to one side, and her high laugh ringing shrilly at her own pronunciation.

"Not the sort of woman to do Josef any good," thought Miss Bronk. "She will underestimate him, and fail completely to understand him. He is too sensitive for Leila."

By the time of the lesson next day Miss Bronk saw Leila as a definite harm threatening Josef.

"Not that he wouldn't see through her," she said to herself, "but he has respect for all Americans, and she will play on that."

Josef was not on hand when she appeared. For the first time he was late that day, and the fear that he might not appear at all led her nervously to pace up and down the level space of grass where they always spread the rug. When he did come, hurrying a little, somewhat breathless, and very apologetic, she went to meet him, and at once, without preliminaries of any sort, told him that she was lending him the money for his passage to America, and that she could find him work when he got there.

She spoke rapidly, but Josef grasped immediately the import of her words. They stood facing each other to one side of the square of rug, and when she stopped suddenly, as though her last breath were wrenched from her, he cried:

"Yes, we go. Tonight!"

"Tonight?"

"When night comes, and it is all black, I go, and you go, and at the Bahnhof I come to you, and we take the *Schnellzug*."

Miss Bronk had to remind him that he had no passport, that there were essential formalities and that there was no reason anyway why they should run off like this at once. At which he seemed disheartened, though she

assured him that it would be a mere matter of time, and not a very long time, before everything could be arranged.

"No—no . . . no, now, tonight," he said, and that he was unreasonable pleased her, and she held both his hands in hers till she thought somebody might be spying on them, and that embarrassed her, and she dropped his hands and stooped for the rug, saying, with a composure that was an adventure to the blood: "That would be very foolish and rash of us, Josef, and it is not necessary.

He let her pick up the rug, and carry it down to the highroad where he left her, though he had always before been very punctilious about such courtesies. He only broke his silence at the last to urge:

"Tonight, Fräulein, tonight, the *Schnellzug*!"

"It is impossible, Josef, quite impossible. You must be reasonable."

Then the nuns appeared again, with their scythes and pitchforks. The road was a public one, and they passed that way every day during the haying, but Miss Bronk was surprised to see them and felt that they were intruders, trespassers even.

"If they hadn't come I could have explained to Josef that it is ridiculous to leave tonight. What a child he is! He is naturally eager to be started." Generally he had walked back to the Gasthof after the lesson with her, but she was relieved that he did not offer to do so today, for she felt strung high from having done what she had so long planned to do. . . .

"I am quite played out," she said to herself, and decided to have her supper in her room. When she entered the inn she caught Herr Rossner peering at her from his office, and she was cut by the professor's wife. "Poor woman, I don't suppose she's had an easy life," Miss Bronk said to herself.

Rosa, eventually bringing in the tray, did not bounce out immediately. Miss

Bronk raised her head to find the girl staring at her.

"Anna ist zurück-ge-kommen," Rosa all at once blurted, in the vocabulary and accent that was Esperanto to Rosa.

"Anna?"

It was a delightful moment for Rosa.

"Die Verlobte von Josef," and she bounced out.

(*Verlobte*: engaged, fiance (e), said the dictionary.)

"Village gossip," said Miss Bronk.

The idea of Rosa telling her a thing like that. How did she know that Miss Bronk had ever heard of Josef? Not that it mattered. But she thought of the aloof profile of the professor's wife and the curious lift to the corners of Herr Rossner's lips.

"Have they all been thinking? . . ."

She didn't know what they might all have been thinking. Things, anyhow! Not that she cared. She would soon be done with Imst. She need never come back to the place, except perhaps on some distant day to a celebration in honor of the son of the town who had gained renown, who had salvaged it from starvation.

"I must work with Josef now," she declared to the evening, "to bring forth the best that is in him. . . . The way will be long and hard," she added gladly.

V

It had not been her habit to stroll out after dark even in these quiet streets, but the room now seemed oppressive, and she thought she would like to walk in the cool air. She threw a scarf about her neck, and hearing the bus from the evening train at the front door, she slipped out by the back way. The professor's wife would know what to think of *that*. The professor's wife seemed all at once a droll figure to Miss Bronk: "An old crank," she thought.

It was "movy night," and the streets were empty—a little terrifying. Miss Bronk scuttled along in the shadow of the houses till she had to stop for

breath beside her pet Saint Christopher. Yesterday had been a fête day, the day of Peter and Paul, and to his burden of the sins of the world Saint Christopher had added the bravado of a boutonnière. Already the flowers were a little drooped, and they were in the moonlight grey and colorless. Grey and colorless and drooping like some people's lives, thought Miss Bronk, and she pitied those people.

The bus was coming from the Gasthof on its return trip to the station, and she drew back and choked with the great billow of dust it flung at her. She remembered that if she had done as Josef wished she would have been on that bus now on her way to the station.

The pleasure was gone from her stroll, and walking quickly back to the inn, she was surprised to see a light in her window.

It was Leila.

"Where on earth do you go nights?" she cried. She embraced "her Abby." She was in high spirits, giddily affectionate. They had just arrived on the bus.

"Jim is with you?"

"You can bet your life Jim is with me," Leila burst into laughter. "You don't think I was leaving him with that Allenby-March woman? Well, I guess not."

Miss Bronk frowned, finding it a little difficult all at once to adjust herself to this brusque intrusion of other lives.

"I thought you liked Mrs. Allenby-March?" she murmured vaguely.

Leila drew her chair closer to Miss Bronk's.

"My dear," she said, "she's a hussy, simply a hussy. Mad about Jim, she was, simply mad about him. Well, I will say for her, she's no fool; she knows how to go about it, but she had to reckon with your Leila. Oh, I nipped it in the bud all right. I said 'Imst for you, Jimmy boy.' . . ."

Miss Bronk stood up.

"Such people!" she said.

"Well, there are a lot of them," ex-

claimed Leila, serenely, and then with a glance at Abigail, "Don't look so shocked, Abby, it's life. It happens often enough. Of course you innocent people, you never know what is going on. How can you, you don't even know yourselves?" and Leila enjoyed a laugh at the droll myopia of the innocent. "You'd have a fine show with Allenby-March . . . she'd put it all over you quick enough. But when any woman begins to monkey with Jim they've got your little Leila to deal with, I'll say they have. . . ."

Miss Bronk could not recover from the distaste of the whole story even after Leila had gone to her own room. She would see Jim tomorrow. "Not tonight, dear, I am too tired." She was so glad that she had settled the matter with Josef before these others arrived. It was most fortunate. For that at least she could be grateful. She only wondered that she did not more easily put out of her mind the trivial episode of Jim and the general's wife.

"How can women do such things?" she said.

To her surprise Herr Rossner knocked, begged a few words . . . a matter of importance. So much had happened during the day, and she was so distraught by it all, that she consented without further thought to step to his office for a moment.

"I am glad that you had rooms for my friends," she began, but he waved that aside; it was not about that he wished to speak. It was something evidently about the Frau Professor. Miss Bronk thought that had the Frau Professor been offended she should have come to her directly about it, rather than to the proprietor of the hotel.

"Imst is not Biarritz," Herr Rossner

was saying, and added something to the effect that his hotel was a conservative one, a family hotel—the best people.

It was possible that the Frau Professor had been startled by Leila's flaunting veils. Leila over-did things, and would certainly sometimes be misunderstood. But if Herr Rossner implied any disrespect to her friends, she must leave certainly. At once she realized that she could not do that on account of Josef; and an annoyance with Leila at having precipitated such a quandary distracted her attention from Herr Rossner.

But only for a moment, for she suddenly heard him say that Josef had left the village that evening on the bus with Anna. "Anna, she says Josef is away from her too long. . . ."

With what words he had led up to this announcement, why at all he was talking of Josef she did not know, but the sharp intake of her breath startled the blandness of the inn-keeper, and he hurried a little recklessly:

"There is scandal. Miss Bronk. The people do not like it that an American lady comes and wants to take our young men to America. Perhaps some young men it would not matter. Some young men we shall be happy to send to America. But Josef we need here. There is a hotel in the next valley. In the next valley perhaps you find young men, tall like Josef—and no Anna. That will be better, no Anna!"

She answered him. Her words swept over him and overwhelmed him, though in them he found no meaning.

They seemed echoes of mocking words in dried dead newspapers, "making the world safe for democracy" and "the greatest good of the greatest number," and the "war to end wars."

"Lies," she added. "all lies."



THREE is only one kind of want-ad that does not insist on experience. It is in the matrimonial news.

Witches' Sabbath

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

I

"**O**UT!"

Nobody could call Agatha Flint a coward. The ball had been at least four inches in; Agatha herself knew it, so did the other three players. Richard Crabbe had whipped over a nasty drive straight to her backhand and her racquet had missed the ball completely. Agatha cared nothing for the ethics of tennis. Honesty was simply a pernicious form of sentimentality. So, with perfect unconcern, she had shouted, "Out!"

Robert Ames was finding it confoundedly difficult to be Agatha's partner and at the same time to retain his self-respect. He gave Crabbe a sheepish apologetic grin, then, turning to the girl, ventured a mild protest. "Are you quite sure the ball was out?"

But she was getting into position to receive Dorothea Parson's service. "All ready!" she signalled, without deigning to answer the courteous question.

When the ball came Ames's way, he prepared to stroke it into the net. Agatha's quick glance, however, was like the jab of a hornet; it scared him into an activity more convulsive than he had intended. As a result, the ball cleared the barrier and dropped at Dorothea's feet. Taken aback by the return—she had evidently relied on her opponent's chivalry—she floundered and sent over a weak lob in Agatha's direction. Agatha, her eyes snapping maliciously, swung her racquet over her head and made a superb killing.

It was a unique match. It couldn't be called a doubles contest, since Agatha was really playing against the other

three, opposing her guile to their fatuous honesty. No matter in what activity Agatha was engaged—nor how many others were involved—she always stood alone; and, nine times out of ten, she emerged with flying colors. You could not stand with her, for the simple reason that she wouldn't allow it. For her, life was a contest, a war to be waged single-handed against the whole world.

Ames today kept recollecting scenes in the Newport summers when they had all been growing up together. As a matter of fact, things had not changed so very much. Agatha had been a queer cranky youngster with legs like a stork's and arms a good six inches too long. She had towered angularly above the rest of them and they had thought her a decided joke. She had not been one of them; the relation had been a miniature battle between one crane and a dozen or more frogs, as it were. Aggie stood on one of her skinny legs and fought the whole crowd.

She had been an unconscionable cheat from the start. No matter where she hit her ball in croquet, it would be found directly in front of the proper wicket when her next turn came around. She was the official wallflower at all parties. The other girls patronized her primly—at a safe distance—and scolded the boys for not dancing with "poor Aggie." The boys would have set up howls of derision had any of their company seen fit to be nice to her. Robert Ames, whose ideas often ran counter to those of the other strutting young males but who never had the courage to admit his "funniness,"

had always had a sneaking admiration for the overgrown and acidulous Aggie; but his groans and jeers, when the girl was under discussion, had been the loudest of all. He had obediently followed the crowd in the pursuit of sweet empty-headed little Dorothea Parson.

Well, here he was back in Newport after five years in Spain as an art student: and what had he found? Dorothea was still sweet and universally beloved; Agatha was still cheating and lying and being treated as comic relief.

"Tell me about Agatha Flint," had been one of Ames's first questions when he reached Newport.

"Just the same as ever," Manson Mott, one of the old childhood gang, had vouchsafed. "Bones and a lot of caroty hair and a disposition like Alexander Pope's."

"And Dorothea Parson?" Ames had pursued.

"Dorothea's a darling—a brick." Mott's voice had straightway warmed with enthusiasm.

"Queer she's never married," Ames had ventured.

"Too particular!" had been the response. "A lot of us were discussing Dorothea a while ago." This with a certain gingerly caution. "We agreed that it showed what a fine little thing she was—going around so much with a married man and never causing the slightest talk—never the least *bit*."

"A married man?" Ames had been guardedly curious.

"Yes—Dick Crabbe. She's a wonderful influence over him. You know what a scamp he used to be with women. Well—that's over now. It's a damned fine friendship."

The two men had at this point carefully avoided each other's eyes. Ames had received the necessary warning of a situation that, to all but the staunch idealists who had grown up in Miss Parson's train, might have been deemed equivocal.

When Ames at length saw Agatha Flint, she had simply taken his breath

away. It was at a rather dull tea on the Richard Crabbe's terrace. Everybody had been simulating ecstasy over Ames's successes in the art world.

And then Agatha, alone and obviously cross, had stridden in.

She was a feast for the eye of a febrile colorist. Her gown, a burnt orange, hung straight from the shoulder, with a loosely knotted girdle. A big black hat, with a sweep of orange Paradise feathers drooping over the brim, screened from view most of her ugly little face. She was still bony and long-drawn-out. Her head was very small, the features tiny—a delicious turned-up nose, for example, with nostrils no bigger than pin-points. Her clear green eyes, her pallor and the bright red hair that crowned her added the last exotic touches.

She had given Ames her hand and remarked in a queer hoarse voice, "You're getting ready to blush and tell me you're really not so *very* wonderful, aren't you? But I'm not going to hand you empty compliments. I'm about to give you a good practical *tip*." She wrinkled up her nose in a grimace that straightway struck Ames as enchanting.

"Yes—do let's have a practical tip for a change," he urged.

"Just this—be nice to Richard Crabbe and you'll land a commission to paint his wife—or Dorothea Parson!" She smiled cynically, enigmatically and, without giving him the chance to answer her, sauntered away.

Several times in the next week, Ames had encountered her for brief moments. She had been characteristically sardonic and waspish. Everybody was delighted. "Same old Aggie!" was the verdict. Even Dorothea Parson evinced a sweet amusement; but, with her big blue eyes fixed on space, she would purse her lips to prevent the smiles from breaking through and announce, "We have never been fair to Agatha. We have taught her to be unkind, I'm afraid. I wish she didn't hate me so." This wistfully. "I'd like to feel I meant something to poor Agatha." . . .

It was obvious to Ames, during the absurd tennis match, that Dorothea *did* mean something to Agatha, in the way that a fly means something to a wanton boy. The fiery-pated Miss Flint would have relished the opportunity to inflict all sorts of hideous tortures on the other woman. Had the two been alone together on a desert island, Dorothea would soon have been knocked over the head and roasted. One could just see Agatha munching Dorothea's succulent flesh, could hear the young bones crackling in her strong white teeth.

Ames was decidedly out of practise and, despite the dishonest decisions of his partner, the game began to go against them. The man couldn't keep his eye on the ball; his gaze was constantly coming to rest on the amazing Agatha. All in white, except for a black veil with a round opening for her cat-like eyes and tiny nose, she had a fantastic and macabre charm for him. She played rattling good tennis, until she saw defeat staring her in the face.

"What will she do?" Ames wondered. "She'll never let Dorothea Parson beat her—"

Of course she wouldn't! At a moment when the other three were watching her closely in her pursuit of a drive, she played her trump-card. Ames was doing his level best to get out of the way but she circumvented him. The result was a jarring collision. Agatha had exquisitely timed her *coup*. The force of the impact set her tottering. Her right foot was twisted under her—and all at once there came a sharp cracking sound.

Agatha winced and shut her eyes. "My ankle!" she muttered.

The lids fluttered up and her green eyes fixed on Ames a glare of venomous import. "Why the devil didn't you keep out of my way?" she snapped.

Kneeling on the turf, she investigated her injury in sulky silence, paying no attention to Ames's stammered apology.

As a matter of fact, Agatha's bony ankles were as strong and flexible as steel. They could give forth brittle

cracks on occasion but no amount of twists or turns could harm them. Ames remembered how staunchly they had abetted her in the past. It was astounding, Agatha's ability to try the old stunts over and over with success. By sheer force of character, she could make people accept her time-worn expedients. Ridicule her as they might and prophesy just how she would act under given circumstances, her companions pretty generally gave in to her in cowed silence at moments of crisis. She outfaced them with her brazen green eyes and dictated her own terms. Agatha was clever enough to have invented new dodges; seldom, however, was she compelled to display ingenuity. The old tricks were almost always good enough.

Today was not the exception. Dorothea was gently solicitous; Crabbe's cynical smile faded out under Agatha's glare; Ames's arm was extended in all deference. Agatha's well-known limp was brought into play and received with sympathy.

Call the set off? Certainly not! Agatha showed herself game to a degree. She scowled down their protests. "It's about time Robert hit a few of the balls that come his way," she remarked.

He didn't hit many. Dorothea and Crabbe ran out the set in short order. Agatha's shrug, as she left the court, was eloquent. With a maimed limb and a partner whose playing was beneath contempt, she had emerged, if not gloriously, at least creditably. There was zest for her—Ames could see it—in the realization that she had made the others behave like fools. She had cowed them into submitting to her stale tactics. That gave her the measure of her own superiority.

H

"HE was the most adorable creature, Richard. He was in my arms when he died. I'd thought he was going to rally—that he'd make the effort for my

sake." Dorothea Parson's wide blue eyes were moist. She seemed to have forgotten her surroundings. With innocent candor, she had leaned very close to Crabbe while she talked: she had looked into his face in a helpless yearning for sympathy. Her sorrow at the loss of the puppy he'd given her had the effect of creating for these two an intimate solitude in the midst of the chattering dinner-guests.

Ames suddenly jumped in his chair—and no wonder—for without warning Agatha, at his side, had dug a sharp elbow into his ribs. The nudge somehow disconcerted him. It brought home to him, for the first time, the realization that Agatha considered him a partner in her malicious scorn of the sweet and amiable Dorothea. Till now he really hadn't been aware that Dorothea's words had aroused his ironic amusement. He had just been listening absent-mindedly to the conversation across the table.

With some confusion he wondered whether Mrs. Parson, at the head of the board, had noticed Agatha's jostling gesture. Despite his silent protest at Miss Flint's methods, however, he found himself meeting her green gaze and returning her sly smile. It was indeed a decided shock to discover her as eager to meet him on any ground whatsoever—even that of a shared malice. Involuntarily, he felt warmed by the subtle flattery of Agatha's attitude. The notoriously spiteful have a strange power of winning to themselves the most candid and fair-minded of souls.

With a strange feeling of guilt he prepared—by way of hinting his unwillingness for further confidences—to launch some noncommittal topic. By a swift tap on his knee and an abrupt motion of the head in Dorothea's direction, however, she silenced him.

Dorothea was continuing in the wistful strain. "People would be much less selfish if they had other things to love besides themselves—even poor puppies that die of distemper." The corners of her mouth lifted in a scarcely percep-

tible smile. "Of course you'll think me the silliest, most sentimental idiot," she mused.

"To be frank," Crabbe corrected her, "I was thinking we'd all be better off if we could get *you* to love us."

"But this isn't right, you know," Ames murmured in Agatha's ear.

"Hush!" she commanded crossly. "I'm listening."

"Indeed you are," he commented, and lapsed into obedient silence.

"No, don't send me another," Dorothea was protesting. "I should feel like a traitor. Oh Richard, you should have seen him in his little coffin—my best handkerchief-box, all quilted in white satin."

"Good God! I shall scream presently," came in an exasperated rasp from Agatha. Ames shook with uncontrollable mirth at this confidence.

"And have you buried all your affections with that favored beast?" Crabbe had queried gallantly.

"No." Dorothea shook her head. "I can still love my gold-fish. The puppy knew all about them, you see, and he didn't resent it. I have fourteen beauties—out in the fountain. They know their own names. The moment I dip my fingers in the water, I can feel their darling nibbly noses. Mouser is my favorite. He knows it, too, and adopts such airs and graces."

By this time Ames was positively terrified. That last anecdote might send Agatha instantly insane. She might do anything. But her eyes, when they looked into his, glinted with diabolical joy, and her smile was coolly malicious.

"Don't worry," she told him. "I've got myself well in hand—now. . . ."

Later, in the drawing-room, Ames watched her narrowly. She sauntered about for a time, hands on hips, whistling to herself in apparent abstraction. Then all at once he saw her framed by one of the long French windows open on the terrace; the next moment she had glided out of the room. The moonlight flooded the marble steps that led into the garden; in her white gown,

with its long narrow train, she seemed of a fantastic height, of an uncanny pallor. Indeed, she looked for all the world like some most exotic and malignant night-bird. She hurried down the steps and disappeared behind a clump of evergreens.

She was up to some mischief, of course. Ames, still feeling himself the guilty conspirator, made his way with elaborate caution to the long window and bolted after her. Reaching the border of the sunken garden, he peered out from behind a cypress tree. The central path was one luminous sheet of moonlight. Agatha's figure was striding ahead at top-speed. On either side the box trees, shaped like candle flames, threw long fingers of shadow upon her. That she had a goal for her nocturnal ramble was obvious. Ames, following her, dodged from covert to covert.

"My God!" he suddenly muttered to himself, "she's after the gold fish." He was crouching now behind a thick enclosure of clipped yew that surrounded the marble fountain. The fountain itself was in the middle of a circle of velvety grass. The whole scene made an exquisite setting for Agatha. Everything within the range of vision was either a dazzle of pale moonlight or a clear-cut mass of green-black shadow.

Oh—he saw it all now! Agatha, draping her train over one arm, picked a dainty way with her long white feet over the drenched turf. She came to a stop beside the fountain, let the slim ribbon of satin fall from her arm and, raising her hands high over her head, tried to dabble her fingers in the top-basin.

"She can't make it," Ames whispered excitedly to himself.

No, she couldn't. But that did not worry her. With gingerly care, she put one slipper on the rounded rim of the lower basin, drew the other foot up beside it, swayed giddily for a moment, then grasped the smooth leg of the bronze Aphrodite who topped the edifice.

"Safe!" breathed out Ames.

Agatha gave a low laugh of triumph. She was able now, by craning her neck, to get her chin above the top basin and to obtain a view of the level sheet of water. Pale Hecate at her midnight incantations couldn't have looked more slyly, subtly evil than did Agatha. She remained motionless for a time and peered down into the marble bowl. Then she shrugged and drew her lips together with annoyance: the moonlight had made the water of a black opacity that even her sharp green eyes could not penetrate.

After a moment's pondering, however, she raised her free arm and dipped one finger into the basin. She shivered slightly from the icy contact, slipped two more fingers beneath the surface and began to splash the water ever so gently. The sound was silvery, ingratiating. It must have been a very Siren's song to the doomed finny pets of Dorothea. Ames, hearing a dry chuckle from Agatha, knew that the fish must have begun to nibble in drowsy curiosity. She was a wily temptress, continuing to lure on her victims by the soft play of her fingers till she had quite lulled their caution to sleep.

All at once her hand stole out of the water with a shower of silver drops. Skilful wooer that she was, she had cajoled a fish into the cupped palm of her hand, had allowed it to cuddle there for a second and then had closed her strong white fingers tight over the clammy body.

The moonlight smote to a quivering metallic sheen the small object she held aloft in her cruel clutch.

"Ugh!" Agatha shuddered and tossed her capture into the grass.

Immediately she was back at her nefarious job of fishing up poor Dorothea's treasures. Deft, of a deadly competence, she trapped them, one after another, into her murderous palm and straightway hurled them over her shoulder to the ground. It was only once in a while that her slippery prey

would wriggle out of her grasp, back into its native element with a flopping splash. It well-nigh froze Ames's marrow to hear her counting up her hideous score.

"Twelve," intoned Agatha dramatically. "Thirteen! Four—" This fourteenth fellow must have been a warrior-like creature, for without warning it leaped from her clutch and struck her in the face. Startled, Agatha with a convulsive gesture let go of the Aphrodite's leg. She lost her balance and was beginning to totter on her precarious perch—

Before he knew what he was doing, Ames had rushed out of his hiding-place to the rescue. Of course, Agatha deserved an ignominious and icy immersion in the capacious lower basin of that fountain—there was no question about it. To have come creeping back, a drenched and shivering ruin, into Dorothea's presence would have been a fitting penalty. Still, the man couldn't bear the thought of it. She had put him under a potent spell; he wanted nothing to break the enchantment.

So, at the very moment when one of her feet slipped off the marble rim and into the water, Ames grasped her firmly around the waist and lowered her to the ground. He half expected a slap in the face as a reward for his gallant action; but Agatha merely pushed him away and, facing him with a slow smile, remarked, "Well—we've got that duty off our minds."

"We!" he gasped. "I happen to be here in the interest of Dorothea. Do I look the sort to relish wholesale slaughter—even of gold fish?"

"I have nothing against the fish," she told him. "I was simply helping them out of an intolerable plight. Fish and I have much in common. Do you suppose the poor cold-blooded wretches enjoyed being coddled by Dorothea?"

He snorted out his protest. "Nonsense! If you'd had humane thoughts on the subject, you'd have wrung their necks. You wanted them to linger."

"Wring their necks!" she scoffed.

"Their heads merge directly into their tails. They have no necks." With studied calm, she bent over and caught up her train. "We must be careful not to step on any of them," she warned him. "Fish are very slippery, and unpleasant to the touch. Their odor, too, is most obnoxious. Do let's get back; I want to wash my hands."

He laughed, but remained firm. "We'll stay right here where we are till the whole fourteen are put back," he announced.

She shrugged. "Really, that wouldn't be wise. A lot of them are doomed, I'm afraid. They might just as well die tonight and be done with it. I may have injured some of them internally, you see: several answered to the name of Mouser—and I gave each one of those a good stiff pinch." A perfect convulsion of silent merriment shook her at that.

Ames had already dropped to his knees and the absurd hunt was on. He lit scores of matches in his creeping progress from fish to fish; often half a dozen of the ineffectual flames would be whiffed out before the spectral shimmering glint of one of the gasping victims rewarded him.

"I know I look like a damned fool," he remarked several times.

"Indeed you do," she would agree. "I can dally with fish and retain my dignity. But then, my motive was quite unsentimental."

"Sheer butchery!" he commented. Then, "Why have you this consuming hatred for poor little Dorothea, by the way?"

She weighed it. "Well," she decided at length, "because she's so fatuous, so damned dull. If she had the sense to make the most of her advantages, I might admire her, you know. My disapproval is objective—it's based on economic principles."

"Good God!" he mocked.

"But it is," she insisted. "That child should have made a brilliant match. If she had any common sense, she'd make Dick Crabbe keep his distance till she'd

landed some choice *parti* like yourself. But this philandering with a married man before she's got a husband—I can't forgive it. I don't care a rap about her morals; it's her stupidity that infuriates me."

"Dick Crabbe?" Ames went back indignantly to that name. "Why, Dick Crabbe's like a big brother, a father, to her—"

"How pretty!" she cried. "You've made a beautiful legend out of Dorothea, you men. You wouldn't admit any fault or blemish in her—not for worlds. Why, in heaven's name, doesn't one of you marry her? Your failure to do that shows you don't believe all that you profess."

"I'd rather not discuss it, please," he rebuked her sternly. But somehow, Agatha's logic had hit its mark; it had neatly pointed the general male attitude toward Dorothea, had stripped it of its sentimental cowardly evasiveness. And Ames, for one, disliked the stark truth back of the delightful myth.

One by one, the fishes were tossed back into the basin. "There!" Ames almost yelled at last. "Fourteen, thank the Lord!" Ruefully he patted the wet knees of his trousers.

"They're smeared with grass-stain," she informed him. "Dorothea will think you've been on your knees to me."

He ignored this and, in most prosaic fashion, began to wash his hands in the lower basin of the fountain. Agatha, following suit, dipped her slender fingers daintily into the water. "You're sulking," she remarked. "You're forgetting that some of the fish are bruised. If you come back in the morning, you can help Dorothea put their little stomachs in slings. What could be sweeter?"

"Damn Dorothea!" he exclaimed and, with a great splash, pounced upon Agatha's chilly fingers.

She made no attempt to escape him. She merely wagged her head sagely and dropped with perfect coolness, "Even those fish would know better—now—than to nibble at my fingers."

III

"THERE you are—I knew it. Come out into the open, Agatha. I want to talk to you." Ames had walked deliberately across the Crabbe library and, drawing aside the heavy drapery in front of the windows, had confronted the wily Miss Flint in her hiding-place. "You've been getting information."

With perfect insouciance, she strode out of her covert and dropped into a chair. Then, stifling a yawn, she stretched daintily.

"I'm rather cramped," she remarked. "I thought they'd never stop talking."

"I've found you out, you see." Ames was stern. He set his feet wide apart, folded his arms and scowled down at her.

"Well?" She patted her lips with her long fingers to stifle another yawn.

Ames continued doggedly in face of her obvious indifference. "I've known from the very beginning. You didn't fool me the least bit, Agatha."

It was quite true. From Newport's first startled flutter of dismay and incomprehension, two weeks before, Ames had drawn his very definite conclusions. "It's Agatha," he had reflected. "She couldn't possibly *not* be the culprit." The past fortnight had been one of flurry and panic for the cottagers; the fashionable crew had somehow resembled a barnyard population at the moment when a hawk is seen wheeling balefully in the sky right over their heads. Some unspeakable creature had organized a destructive campaign of anonymous letters—that had been the bald fact of the case. The newspapers all the while had clamored of "the poison pen" and elevated the business to the level of public scandal.

The epistles were nasty venomous things, with a corroding bite to them. The author manifested the keenest sort of relish in the sordid occupation of informing people in regard to the sinful intrigues of their most cherished relatives. The queerest manifestation of the universal panic was a tendency

among the victims to compare notes with each other.

The cottagers, losing their heads, had forgotten to keep the abominable revelations dark. Ames had perused several of the letters and had been forced to admit them worthy of Swift. It was stupidly taken for granted everywhere that the persecutor was a man. Ames alone perceived the deliciously feminine character of the concise and deadly missives. Each sentence had a grace, a brittle soprano quality that could have come only from a woman—and from only one woman. Ames, keeping his surmises to himself, felt again that he was playing the part of conspirator. Agatha herself, when she saw him, dropped veiled hints of an ironic understanding. The man found himself in a situation similar to that at the Parson dinner after the startling poke in the ribs.

That jab of Agatha's angular elbow had seemed to inject a disturbing virus into Ames's veins. He hadn't been the same man since, he often reflected. He had been put under a subtle enchantment at once. As a matter of fact, Agatha had had him in thrall from the time he was a small boy; so it was only natural that his capitulation should have been complete directly she had lifted her little finger—or her elbow!—in sign of friendship.

Not that she was cordial or sweet at present! She continued to inform him, by every glance and grimace, that he was the most dismal sort of fool. It was indicative of her power that Ames, in his self-communion, addressed himself now for the most part as "idiot" or "ass." What could be more simple-minded, indeed, than to acknowledge his infatuation for a fiend and to dog her trail with matrimonial intent? No wonder Agatha wagged her wicked head at him! At any rate, his fighting blood was up. Intoxicated by her strange beauty and smarting at the same time from her hornet-tongue, he dashed ahead with but the one goal in mind. He'd marry her if it killed him.

His thoughts on the subject reached but a little distance from the altar. He forgot—or refused—to contemplate the more remote future.

In only one way could he turn the trick, Ames had realized. Get her into a corner, with her back to the wall, and cut off her retreat! So he had tracked her throughout the fortnight of the letter scandal, following her slimy corkscrew trail without swerving. That she knew he was after her was obvious. Often Ames admitted himself puzzled, for Agatha seemed deliberately to aid him in the search. When the scent grew faint, she'd duck right under his nose and give him a rank new whiff to take up.

Well—he had his reward tonight, at Mrs. Crabbe's dance. While Dorothea and Richard Crabbe were strolling in intimate converse from the ball-room to the library, Ames had seen Agatha dodge ahead of them and disappear through the doorway of the room destined for their tête-à-tête. It had been a good half-hour before the wistful Miss Parson and her companion had emerged. Then Ames had felt that the time was ripe at last. Agatha was trapped in her corner! It was up to him. The drawing of the curtain had given him a most dramatic thrill.

But Agatha took it with amazing indifference. Her cold green eyes, level in his, confessed no startled recognition of his heroism or dignity or cleverness; they showed merely a tolerant disdain, a disconcerting satirical glint. "He's promised her a saddle horse," she remarked, quite as if his sole object were to hear the news she had gathered so dishonestly. "Fatherly interest indeed! In the cause of sound common sense, that girl's got to be exposed; her example is bad for the coming generation." She shivered delicately.

"And you mean to do the exposing?" Ames was sharp.

Agatha smiled and said nothing. Of course, the man reflected, her brain was spinning out malicious sentences at this very moment. She could easily deal

with him and compose her daily letter at the same time.

He shook his head eloquently at her. "You've done all the exposing you're going to, Agatha," he told her.

"But this was to be my masterpiece!" she protested. She continued to smile inscrutably and to watch him with a vague curiosity.

With a desperate effort, Ames groped for words that would state his case succinctly and still not be open to her stinging sarcasm. "You'll stop writing these letters at *once* and marry me or—"

"Has it ever occurred to you," she interrupted, "that I'm really the most transparently honest woman in the world? My conscience wouldn't have allowed me to accept you, for example, until I'd showed you the lowest depths of my perfidy. Still, I wonder." She deliberated for a moment. "Maybe I wouldn't have been so square with you, after all, if I hadn't known that the way to get you was to be my own fiendish self without reservations."

"Never mind the metaphysics of the case," he explained with impatience. "Will you marry me?"

"Yes indeed! I'll marry you. I've been counting on your offer. I'm fearfully hard up." She gave her queer soundless laugh, tapped him lightly on the shoulder and with a last wag of her evil little head swept out of the room.

IV

AGATHA, kneeling at the altar in her superb wedding gown, evidenced quite frankly her disdain of the noble old service, of the congregation, the groom and the protecting Deity.

With a subdued whisper of garments, she rose at the end of the ceremony. Unfortunately her foot was caught in the hem of her skirt. She stumbled and would have fallen if her husband had not caught her in his clumsy grip.

She pushed him away crossly. "You were stepping on my gown," she muttered. "Please be more careful. I only just saved myself." Her tone was mordant, biting.

"My God!" Ames cried in his soul. "What have I let myself in for?"

But the next moment, with the mockery of her green gaze upon him, he was reflecting exultantly that he didn't care. He'd sold his soul to a devil; but nothing in the world could break the spell of her subtle enchantment. No, he'd never regret this bargain!

Unconsciously his eyes sought out Dorothea Parson and lingered on her with an expression of gloating triumph. She looked at present about as stimulating to his taste as a pink bonbon. Better a perpetual Witches' Sabbath than a lifetime of humdrum domesticity with a mere fatuous human being!



WIT is a beautiful woman. Humor is the same woman after she has downed three cocktails.



LAUGHTER was invented to distinguish some jokes from others.



Sonya's Flight

By Ellis O. Briggs

I

ONE loses, in Turkey, the ability to show surprise at contrasts which, in another land, would wrench the sagging jaws wide open. Thus, when I caught sight of an American sailor a hundred feet away, strolling in my direction, I merely told myself that a mosque courtyard was a queer place to see him, and I went back to my own reverie; a reverie which was bound up with thoughts on quitting Constantinople.

"Do you mind if I sit down with you, Mr. Edwards?"

My eyes removed themselves from a mammoth Kurdish *hodja*, who was waddling into the mosque, and began again at their own level; that is, at the waist of the American sailor whom I had casually noticed a few moments before. When they encountered his blue eyes I jumped to my feet, holding out my hand.

"Well, Jim! I might have guessed that the only gob who would come to Eyoub would be you. I haven't seen you since we took that trip up the Gulf of Ismid on the destroyer. Sit down and have a cup of coffee."

Now the fact that one of our enlisted men had proved sufficiently sympathetic to the charms of Eyoub to have moved himself from the dives of Pera, where his mates were consuming *cau de vie*, *vodka* and *mastik*, was quaint enough in itself to stamp the chap as an unusual seaman. "I'm glad to see you," I said, for the second time. I called the owner of the coffee shop and ordered a cup for Jim.

My friend folded his tall body together, doubling his legs under the table. "Yes, I'll have a coffee—thanks."

Something in the slow drawl of his speech and the pause before the last word made me look at Jim more closely.

Tall and muscular, with a blonde head and intelligent blue eyes, Jim had earned his greatest distinction during my slight acquaintance with him by being monosyllabic to an extraordinary degree. He had given me the impression, subconsciously perhaps, of being not exactly sullen, but nevertheless with a definite strain of secretiveness about him. And that behind a broad, genial face which made me believe oftentimes that his brevity of expression was part of a huge joke which he was playing on himself. The man was built on the lines of a perfect football tackle. Huskiness lurked in his every gesture. Yet this afternoon I was to form a wholly new picture of the man.

Something undoubtedly was troubling him, for his big cheeks were pinched and worried. There was a sort of dogged hopelessness in his eyes.

"What are you doing way out here?" I asked him.

There was a pause, punctuated by tapping of his cheap Turkish cigarette on the table. The fingers that held it were lean and they shook as he struck the match. "Following you. You're the only man I could think of to help me."

"Following me!" I exclaimed. "What the devil were you doing that for?"

"I was too far behind you to catch the Golden Horn ferry you came on . . . so I took the next one." Jim

stopped after the last clause, just as though he expected me to understand right away what he meant. An annoying habit of his, I thought—this ending in midair. The way he did it made me feel that it was up to me and not up to him; that it was my own fault if I did not follow his thoughts.

"It's about Sonya," said Jim suddenly.

"Sonya?" I raised my eyebrows. "Has she been sending you postcards from Bucharest?"

I was sorry when I made that last remark. It slipped out; kidding Jim about a Russian girl he had been in love with—and futilely, I knew—last winter. When Sonya went away with some of the other refugees who had feared the time when Constantinople would be turned over to the Turks, I suppose Jim must have been pretty downcast. But that was six months and more ago. Sonya had never worried about Jim. Why should she? The headwaitress at the *Cercle Muscovite* could take her choice of the officers of the Allies in those days. I had, on several occasions, achieved a cynical grin all my own over the rumor that Jim had been seen with Sonya. Sonya could have had colonels—not gobs, for sweethearts. She would have been stalking small game indeed by letting a sailor fall in love with her.

Somewhere at the back of Jim's eyes there were little points that glowed. "Sonya never went to Bucharest, Mr. Edwards. She stayed in Constantinople."

I hopped up as if I had discovered a bee in my trousers. "You're crazy, Jim! I know she went to Bucharest."

The sailor favored me with his slow smile, but there was no amusement in it. "You could lose money betting on that. She didn't leave the city."

I sat down again and tapped a finger on Jim's blue naval trouser to emphasize what I was saying. Sonya was a common Russian name; Jim meant a different woman. There was no question in my mind on that score. "The Sonya I knew," I began, "was at the *Cercle Muscovite*. Before she came here in 1920 as a refugee she had a title of

some sort. She went to Bucharest last February because she thought that if she stayed after the allied occupation had ended the Turks would turn her over to the Soviet agents. She was sentenced to be hanged three years ago for her part in Wrangel's Crimea campaign."

Jim nodded in that deliberate way of his. "And the soldiers of the Allies have now left Constantinople, Mr. Edwards."

"Do you mean to tell me that this same Sonya is still here?" I demanded incredulously. "Here in Constantinople, Jim?"

"She is. We are going to be married."

Compared to Jim's despondent slouch I know I must have made him look like a West Point cadet on parade just then. I would not—I could not—believe him. "Why on earth would a woman like Sonya want to marry an American sailor?"

Jim drew himself together. A dignity seemed to drop over him. It was as if he had donned some new garment that changed his whole aspect and my reaction to him. "Sonya loves me." That was all Jim said.

I shook myself. The man was undoubtedly crazy. If Sonya had stayed in Constantinople when her friends went to the capital of Rumania to save their necks, she was not doing it solely for the love of an American sailor. There was some trick about it. Something that Sonya knew, if Jim did not know it.

"Even supposing Sonya loves you, Jim—what on earth are you doing trailing me way out to Eyoub this afternoon?"

"Mr. Edwards," said Jim quietly, "I've known you for some time. Not well, but I've seen you often. In the last few days I've tortured my brain . . . you are the last man . . . the only man . . . I can think of to help me." Jim drew from the recesses of his navy blouse a leather wallet, opening it to show me. "Four Turkish liras. Value two dollars and thirty cents. That's all I have . . . for the present."

"For the present." I forgot to wonder what he meant by that as I stared at his wallet. Old though it was, it had the *Mark Cross* stamp inside. Once it had borne a set of gold initials, together with gold triangles at the corners. The impressions remained in the worn pigskin. New, that wallet had cost him a large sum of money. I looked into Jim's eyes, and there was no subterfuge in them.

"I'm broke," he said.

"What would you do if you had money, Jim?"

"Move Sonya to a decent place to stay, until I can marry her."

"Oh, so you're supporting her somewhere in the city?"

A curt nod of Jim's head.

"Need the money badly . . . right now?"

Jim raised his broad chest, inflating it. "If I don't pay an Armenian woman the money I owe for Sonya," . . . a weariness crept into his voice, ". . . Sonya will be turned over to the Turkish police. Then to the Soviet agents."

"In that case, Jim, you ought to marry her right away and arrange for some sort of American protection. Our consulate. . . ."

"My enlistment," he interrupted, "expires in two weeks. We plan to be married then, and go away together."

"You won't go far, old man, on the money you'll earn between now and your discharge." I did not relish my role of perpetual gloom, but the affair was becoming more and more fantastic. That Sonya could have fallen in love with Jim, even for one minute, I felt was a gaunt, lean possibility. But that she intended seriously to marry him, to go back to the United States with him, to live with him as his wife . . . that was too much for me. Why, they would have no more in common than an Eskimo and a woman of Burma! But nevertheless, because I liked Jim, and because I was curious, I was willing to throw away a few dollars which I would later enter on the column entitled Useful Information.

"Suppose I advance you a hundred dollars in Turkish paper?"

Jim sat absolutely motionless for so long that I began to count the people going by me down the cobbled street. Abruptly he pushed out his hand, over our two empty coffee cups, and I realized that the bones of my own were being squeezed into one-half their usual compass.

"If you can get liberty tonight, Jim, come to my apartment at eight o'clock. I'll go with you and we'll see what we can do about Sonya."

Jim took my address and I left him, hunched over the bare table, staring at the multicolored throng of Eyoub, Constantinople's most beautiful suburb.

II

By half-past seven that night I had finished a leisurely dinner and sat alone with my cigarette and a tiny glass of *douzico*, waiting for my American sailor.

Sonya in love with one of our seamen! If somebody had told me that, without any warning, I would have called it the funniest joke I had heard that year. I myself had cast an appreciative eye on Sonya at the *Cercle Muscovite*; on nights when I had come to the restaurant to sit and sip my lemon-flavored *vodka* and watch her move about. Sonya had a beauty more suggested than actually present. You *felt* her and you turned your eyes. Feature by feature, she was merely pretty, in a rather exotic way. But you got an impression, not an echo to a single part of her.

What impression? She was the head-waitress. She met you at the heavy hanging curtains after you had given your wraps to the Cossack officer. If you came frequently and dined expensively, she spoke your name and smiled a little. Not a real smile and not exactly a mechanical smile. It was a mask . . . but why did Sonya need a mask? That question was more simple, but then—I could only guess at it. Her life until the war . . . the daughter of a count

. . . wealth . . . ease . . . protection. The revolution she had passed through had chilled something about Sonya; had given her a mask. But there was always the suggestion that it was not a mask; that something vivid, burning and alive, lay beneath it, beneath her white skin, lay ready to be unlocked if you but held the proper key.

Did Jim have that key? It was incredible! I would go tonight with him and convince myself that she was playing some complicated game with him as only an incidental—an instrument. What was at the back of Sonya's head I did not even try to imagine. A year ago I knew she could have taken her pick of all the Allied officers in Constantinople. And American sailors did not frequent the *Cercle Muscovite*. Officers went there—officers with many rows of ribbons and the price of champagne. They sought for Sonya and she dined with them. She sat at their tables and her eyes were dark and saw far away. . . . Sonya walked home each night alone.

There was a sound of footsteps on my stairs. My big blond caller entered and tossed his white watch cap on my table.

"I'm a little late."

For answer I handed him one hundred and sixty-eight Turkish liras which, at that day's exchange, had cost me an even hundred dollars. Jim stuffed the bills into his battered old wallet. Then he scribbled an I. O. U. with a stubby fragment of pencil.

For myself, I considered this promise to pay a gesture directed at my own psychology. I do not like gallery plays, but I evened it up, so I thought, by one of my own. I tore the scrap of paper through the middle and threw the pieces into my fireplace.

"I don't expect you'll have the money for a long time, Jim. By the way . . . what made you join our navy?"

He looked at me queerly, then glanced at the fireplace and back to my eyes; he looked and he quite understood me. A slight flush came to his cheeks and instead of replying he walked to my

bookcase and turned his back on me. He pulled down a volume by Anatole France, running through the pages with a light ruffle.

"May I take this—*Le Reine Pédaque*—to Sonya? She hasn't much to read, where she is—and she is fond of Anatole France. Good. Let's be going."

"Jim! Why did you join the navy?" I repeated my question sharply.

He shook his head. We were out on the street, walking toward Taxim, before I got any reply. "Some day I think I'll tell you."

Half way down the *Grande Rue* we turned off on the right, passing the charred remains of the *Nouveau Théâtre*. We marched down filthy alleys, dark except for an occasional gleam beneath a shuttered window. Our shoes made damp clicks on the sweating cobbles. At length we came to a narrow street that was pitch dark, save for the reflection from a light a hundred feet ahead. I very nearly cried out as Jim's strong fingers dug into the muscle of my upper arm.

"What's that?"

At first I saw nothing; nothing but the gloom so thick that it seemed to eddy between the evil buildings. Then I did see something; a man. He stepped out of a dark doorway and the light ahead shone for a second on the polished brass crescent that every Turkish policeman carries hung across his chest when he is on duty. With his back to us now the man was moving away. He was gone.

The air went out through Jim's teeth like pressure escaping from a punctured tire. "A cop! Quick, we go in exactly where he was standing!"

We knocked and first a slit on a level with our eyes, then the door itself, was opened.

Madame Atmadjian slammed shut the door and then stood back, surveying us. Fat until the creases of her body bulged like a greasy bag full of doughnuts, she was an apparition to make you shudder in bad dreams at night. She shrieked an order in Armenian and

three ugly children disappeared, padding like rats into inner rooms.

"End now gennelmun," said Madame in an atrocious accent, looking first at Jim and then at me, "you veesh to see Sonya?" She moved closer, commanding and repulsive. "You pay me . . . or . . ."

I felt the hair on the back of my neck rise up and wriggle in protest. There was something reeking, corrosive about Madame. "Lissen me, my frens," she exploded. "I hev kip Sonya for you! Sonya bed think for me. *Dangereuse!* You pay . . . or I geev Sonya *gendarme turque*."

Neither of us had thus far said a word. At my elbow the body of the sailor stiffened. I tackled Madame in French, hoping to find her statements less incomprehensible.

Her bushy eyebrows came up interrogatively. They were so heavy that they might have been pasted over her close black eyes.

"*M'sieu est bien gentil,*" she said.

"Never mind that," I continued. "What are you threatening to do?"

"I shall give Sonya to the police, *mon vieux* . . . tomorrow."

"No," I contradicted, "you will do nothing of the sort."

"End wy?" panted Madame, swelling up like a cream of tartar biscuit in a very hot oven.

"Because you will make more money by being honest with us," I told her in French.

A loose-lipped smile with a background of jaundiced teeth instantly took the place of Madame's leer. "I hev mek my leetl jok, ees eet not?" she cooed. "*Naturellement*, I knew you hev my money."

Jim, who had been standing silent, scrutinizing Madame, listening to us both, handed the woman twenty-five Turkish liras. Her eyes narrowed as she tucked the dirty bills into the cavern of her bosom. She faced me, talking rapid but abortive French. "It is so hard, *M'sieu*, since the Allies go away." She waved her arms in a paroxysm of gesticulation. "We are so poor here

. . . so unfortunate. It is the great misfortune that the Turks come back to Constantinople."

Well knowing, for my part, the propensity of Levantines to assert their poverty—no matter what their actual wealth—I was about to cut Madame short when Jim began to speak.

"Sonya will be here for two or three weeks. Twenty-five liras a week is more money than you could make in any other way. If, at the end of that time, Sonya says you have not annoyed her . . . I promise to pay you a hundred liras. I give you my word."

Madame uttered an excited cry in her own tongue. I expect that, mentally at least, she was completely bowled over. A hundred liras from the man who had pled with her that morning to grant a few days of grace on twenty-five! Beneath her hairy brows I saw Madame's little eyes screw up, and I knew she was thinking hard, albeit she still fawned on us.

"Good!" she cried. "I kip Sonya like dawter. Madame luv Sonya, *beaucoup*. You veesh to see her? You know her room? *Allez!*"

I followed Jim up the rank, creaking stairs. Up two flights with smoky lanterns showing cracked walls to which the palms adhered at the touch; up one flight more and we were under the eaves, with a small door ahead of us.

Jim knocked. "It's I, Sonya. Jim."

I heard a squeak of rusty bed springs, and then a step on the floor.

It had been my intention to enter with Jim. I was sure that if I did, if I could observe how she greeted him, watch Sonya's face and expression—then . . . then I could have some inkling of what she meant to do with him. That was my plan now, and I was only two steps behind when Jim turned to me, his big face shining like a beacon with a joy that went straight into me.

"I always have to wait a minute or two," he whispered. "Sonya fixes her hair. . . ."

There was a sound of paper being extracted from the keyhole; a little movement, but it meant the surrender

of what shred of privacy Sonya had in that ghastly Armenian household.

Somehow that sound, trivial, yet indicative of so much that I could only imagine, meant more to me than all the things I could have watched. With a pricking at my heart I turned away and walked to the head of the stairs. I did not come until Jim called me.

Sonya wore a cheap black dress, rubbed shiny at the elbows. She looked at me and there was a moment of hesitation. A smile crinkled at the corners of her mouth. "Mr. Edwards! A surprise! You will sit at your usual table . . . tonight . . . as yesterday evening?"

III

MANY, many times had Sonya smiled at me like that, and many, many times I had followed her pliant body down the aisle with the red carpet at the *Cercle Muscovite*. Her smile . . . a mask? It faded and the features showed me calm repose. Cheeks white as last night's snow, thin brows above dark blue eyes, and her coal black, blue black hair, slicked tight and parted in the middle. Sonya, the refugee! Yet once that voice had tinkled like a silver sleigh bell—as her silver sleigh bells must have tinkled in the frosty night when Sonya rode across the Neva bridge in far away Saint Petersburg. Saint Petersburg? Now that was Petrograd. The Sonya of Saint Petersburg—now that was Sonya—the refugee, with a mask . . . for emotions of yesterday.

How could I know? Sonya and Jim sat on her narrow bed, and the hands of the woman touched the American's cheek. I only felt again the strange, magnetic fascination I had felt before.

"I thought you had gone to Bucharest months ago, Sonya?"

The Russian woman shrugged. Not the Levantine shrug, but a movement of careless dismissal. She drew more closely the shawl that wrapped her figure. "Bucharest . . . Constantinople . . . is there a difference? Tell me, what did Madame say tonight?"

Jim told her. There was a ring in his voice as his arms held the woman he loved; she said nothing until he had finished.

"Jim, I do not think Madame will wait two weeks. For some reason—perhaps because once I was rich and had women like her for my servants—Madame hates me."

"Sonya, I think you are right," I said. "Jim; did you watch Madame's face after you gave her the money? When she cried out something in Armenian? Madame was telling herself that if it was worth twenty-five liras a week to you, and a bonus of a hundred liras at the end; then she could get as much more from the Russian Secret Service."

I saw Sonya raise her hands in a gesture she could not control. Her slim fingers pressed against her throat; pressed hard, with the strength of convulsion. The Russian Secret Service . . . hanging. Once more Jim's arms went about Sonya's shoulders and for the second time that night her eyes, the color of the eastern sky at sunset, were hidden from me.

"And I," cried Jim in a tone of anguish, "tonight I saw a Turkish *gendarme* standing in front of this house, Sonya. Perhaps Madame has already warned them. A policeman—he was standing in front of the door."

Before I could speak, Sonya was on her feet. "You saw a Turkish *gendarme* . . . in front of this house?"

"We were not sure what he was doing," I interposed. "He walked away without stopping us."

Sonya sat down at Jim's side. There was a hint of color in her cheeks; the first I had ever seen touch them. The head of the sailor was bowed and he was muttering wildly about desertion . . . tonight . . . a boat to escape in. "Jim, you know you cannot desert. And I would not allow you." Sonya picked up the hand that lay limp in his lap and she carried it up to her breast.

Ever since we had left Madame I had felt the Armenian woman's acquisitive sneer biting its way into the recesses of

my own spirit. "I have an idea," I began suddenly, "that Madame will keep her word until she thinks Sonya is about to depart. Madame will do that because she will want to get as much as she can out of Jim. Now, Jim told her two or three weeks. The thing to do is to get away unexpectedly, before that time."

"But my discharge isn't for two weeks," said Jim, glancing up with his haggard eyes.

"I know that," I said. "But I have a scheme of my own. What would happen, Sonya, if you marched downstairs between us, out the door?"

"Madame would inform the Turkish police in five minutes."

"H-mm," I remarked, and considered. "How far is it from this window to the ground?"

"It is far, and the hill slopes steeply. I could not jump."

"Nobody wants you to jump, Sonya!" I exclaimed, carried away for the moment by my own thoughts as they took shape before me. "Instead of jumping, suppose you made a rope of strips of blankets from your bed. That would not disturb Madame. Are you strong enough, Sonya?"

She stretched out her arm and the skin was cool. When she moved I could feel the muscles ripple. There was strength enough there to climb down from the bells of the Campanile in Venice . . . but the ground from her window was but a short thirty feet.

"I do not understand," said Sonya. Jim sat as of stone, head bowed with the weight of oppression.

I was silent some moments, busily thinking. Day after tomorrow, or a week hence, for me it made not the slightest difference. I was leaving Constantinople anyway. Day after tomorrow; then Sonya could escape from the house tomorrow night. Madame would not find out until the following morning. Too late, it would be, for Madame to stop us.

"As you know, Sonya, it would be impossible for me to get a visa for you

to leave the city. Therefore you cannot start with me. But I can start from Turkey *without* you and get you at a spot I have in mind, and take you on to Vienna by airplane. There is a beach beside the Black Sea, six miles west of the head of the Bosphorus. I want Jim to hire a fast motorboat and have it in readiness at a Galata wharf on the Bosphorus tomorrow night. You will leave this house by the window, secretly, and go to that wharf as quickly as possible—straight from this house. Thirteen miles up the Bosphorus is the Black Sea. Cruise west along the shore; to this beach, where I shall come for you."

I went carefully over the plan and as I talked I watched the light come back into Jim's eyes. His expression alone quite repaid me.

"And now, one thing more." I faced Sonya, scanning her face for the slightest reaction. "What do you think of this policeman who was standing in Madame's doorway?"

"What do you think, Mr. Edwards?" she replied softly, without hesitation.

"I asked you," I returned, smiling in spite of myself.

"Then," said Sonya, "I think he paused only to light his cigarette. I agree that Madame would not have reported that I was here until she thought there was no more money coming."

"What are you trying to get at, anyway?" demanded Jim.

"Nothing much," I said lightly. "Then we'll forget about this policeman. I think I know Johnny Turk pretty well myself. If he suspected, he would think it over for a day or two before he did anything; even then his suspicions would have to be pretty well grounded to stir him up. The Turks are a lazy lot," I concluded, with a gesture which was meant to lend weight to a rather dubious generality.

I leaned back in my chair, the one chair in the room. "Sonya, if I get you away day after tomorrow, will you marry an American sailor?" It was a hard thing to ask, with Jim a yard from me.

Sonya met my eyes without flinching. "Shall I tell you first why you ask me? It is because you are of the class, in America, that I belonged to, in Russia. The class that you think is not Jim's in America."

"I did not say that," I protested. "I asked you. . . ."

"What I have been," she cried, "that is dead! I am what I have been no longer. From your men, Mr. Edwards, and not from the officers who came each night to the *Cercle Muscovite*, you could learn of the things that make women like me wish to live. It is for me to say that I love Jim! It is not for you to ask that again." Abruptly she clung to the arm of her sailor.

Sonya's eyes were hard and I looked away. Did Jim have the key to the mask that was Sonya? In the days when the *Muscovite* had catered to the rich and idle officers of the Allies there had been a thousand men who had wanted to have it. Jim was an American sailor, and his rank was only a seaman. If Jim had been something else once . . . and strongly I suspected it . . . but surely he could not have told Sonya.

The girl with the white, immobile features was clever and resourceful. Did she mean what she said, or had she been fooling us both? I could not decide. If she loved Jim, she would marry him. But I could not believe it.

There was something more I wanted to know about the Turkish policeman. I had caught, in addition to something concrete which I had not mentioned, an undercurrent of feeling, a fragment of passing ideas, at my first word about the man who had slipped from Madame's dark doorway.

But as I stayed, smoking my cigarette and looking out the window at the lights of the fishing boats close-packed up the Golden Horn, while Jim and Sonya whispered together, sitting on Sonya's narrow bed, I was almost convinced that she loved him. I wanted to believe it. I would put by my doubts; had I not promised to help them?

IV

IT was midnight when I left, and I walked home alone to my quarters. For a long time I packed, and I slept very poorly.

All the next morning I spent with my passport, going first for the Turkish visa, which gave me permission to depart, and then to the consulate of the republic of Austria.

After lunch I hired a vicious motor car and rode to the flying field at San Stefano. The hangars which had so recently hummed with the activity of the Royal Flying Corps were almost deserted. Instead of British mechanics in brown jumpers over their spotless blue uniforms I saw a few puttering Levantines, Turkish customs men, and three machines owned by the Franco-Rumanian Paris to Constantinople company.

"*M'sieu Jonescu?* . . . Jonescu Effen-dim?" The man was pointed out, supervising some work on his small plane.

M. Jonescu was a handsome Rumanian, tall and dark-haired. Further, I knew him to be a crack pilot. I drew him aside and we had a long talk, during which Turkish liras changed hands, while my briar and several of his *Cavalla* cigarettes puffed quickly. We examined maps and I made some small markings to show a place I meant. When I went away, we shook hands, and a minute later I was having my spine run through the top of my head as I bounced over the frightful road in the car—back to the city.

At six o'clock that evening Jim arrived at my apartment. He brought me a small, square picture of Sonya. I pasted it on my passport and we spent almost an hour with glue, rubber stamps and colored ink. The alterations were neat and quite technical.

I was high-strung myself that night. From eight o'clock, when the big sailor left me, until three o'clock in the morning, when I set out in the car for the flying field, I did nothing but pace futilely about; discovering things which ought to go in my suitcases but which would not because they were already

full; drinking often of whiskey and soda; smoking innumerable cigarettes that stuck to my fingers. After all, today, or in a week, that was entirely immaterial. It was not that—I was worried about the sailor and Sonya. Through the long night I fancied I heard distant shots, yells, and sharp commands of Turkish policemen marching past with their captive—a woman.

Three o'clock. It was dark when my automobile arrived. The moon had set and it was too early for the first touch of light in the east.

Jonescu and I ate a sketchy breakfast in the hangar, beside his machine, while sleepy customs officials, enraged at being turned out at that hour, messed up my belongings.

Mechanics wheeled the plane from the shed. It was a small affair, with a limousine compartment that had room for two people. The motor was started and I was about to step from the hangar to get in when I was intercepted by a man who must have been standing in the shadows. As the light fell on him I noticed that he was wearing the uniform of a major in the Turkish Nationalist Army.

"Why is it, Effendim?" he asked politely, "that you have rented this machine, holding two, when you could have gone in the regular airplane for a quarter the cost, and starting only four hours later?"

I offered him a cigarette and he took it. "I am in a great hurry. This way I reach Vienna tonight. By the ordinary plane I would have to stop at Bucharest and Budapest, and I would not reach Vienna until tomorrow."

"What is this great hurry of yours, Effendim?"

"It is a personal matter," I said. "But I will tell you. I wish to meet my wife in Vienna . . . tonight."

"Ah!" Under his black *kalpak* the eyebrows of the officer came up. "Let me see your passport, Effendim. That new coat, for a lady, that the customs men found in your suitcase," he remarked, "that is for your wife, too? Yes, undoubtedly."

The major unfolded my familiar light blue American document, scanning my visas and seals. To my dismay he turned from the Turkish visa to depart, which was correct, for *one* person, to the Austrian visa to enter, which was also correct, but for *two* persons; the holder of the passport and his wife. The picture of the wife was pasted on, in good order.

"This is strange," said the officer to me, in Turkish. "The visa from our government gives you permission to depart *alone*. But the visa of Austria gives you permission to enter *with* your wife. Where is she?"

"In Vienna, of course."

"But how did she get to Vienna, if you have her passport?"

"She has one of her own," I answered testily. "When we are together we use mine. If you knew anything about foreign travel, my man. . . ."

"And this picture," he broke in, "you say is your wife?"

"Certainly!" I cried. "Whose else picture do you think would be on my passport?"

"I am not at liberty to guess, Effendim." He grinned, and it was a grin that I did not relish. "That story is ingenious. Mr. Edwards. But this picture looks very, *ver-y* like the picture of a woman who is sought, charged with treason, by the Russian Government . . . a woman who was last year a waitress at the *Cercle Muscovite*. Come, Effendim, admit that I know who she is."

My jaw fell open, and I glanced past the man at my plane that was waiting. About my head, as I looked, I felt clattering all the plans I had laid with such care; plans for the rescue of Sonya. Jonescu sat in the pilot's seat. The motor turned slowly.

The confounded major was smirking. "I am Bimbashi Osman Omer Bey, Mr. Edwards, and I belong to the Turkish Secret Service. If you look at me closely you may recognize the policeman who was standing by the house where Sonya was hidden. But it was dark there . . . you would not remem-

ber me. Did you take us Turks for such fools as not to suspect *something* when an American sailor came every night to the same house?"

I made no reply. There didn't seem to be much to say at the moment. . . . But my mind turned with a wrench to the thought of a wharf near the Galata bridge, where even at this moment in all probability a motorboat was putting out, turning leftward and driving sturdily west and north against the rushing current of the Bosphorus, up and up to where the Black Sea opened, six miles on. On and on that craft was advancing—I could almost hear the throb of its motor—and in it were two persons who trusted me, and whom I was about to fail. . . .

I visioned the craft nosing leftward again and grounding at the little crescent beach near Tchatalda . . . two figures debarking—two figures crouching in shadow—two figures waiting, waiting through the interminable hours, probing the dawn for the drone of an airplane that would bear me to them, symbol of safety, of escape . . . of happiness . . . a symbol which now, as it seemed to me, would never appear.

The Turkish major delicately coughed behind his hand.

"You may be unaware, my friend," he said, "that the Bosphorus is patrolled."

His words seemed an answer to my unspoken and desolate thoughts.

"It is also possible," he continued, "that a motorboat tied alongside a Galata wharf at an unseemly hour and for no ordinary purpose may be an object of curiosity to a servant of the state, such as for instance, myself. . . ."

It was too much! Fool! Fool! Innocent idiot that I was! Making a plan such as I had in all simplicity—putting into my own incompetent hands the safety and happiness of two mortals as trusting as myself—and as impotent under the eye of the Turk. There was nothing to do, but—

Suddenly my right arm shot out, with every ounce of my body behind it. It was, apparently, just what the Bimbashi

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had seen coming. He swerved, and my fist struck the cord at his shoulder, spinning him about, plunging me past him.

Perhaps I tried to shout to Jonescu. I was conscious of hearing nothing but a dry rattle in my throat. And then, as I fully expected to be shot down from the rear by an infuriated officer of Kemal Pasha, I was blocked from my plane by four Turkish privates who seemed to rise from the ground, directly in my path. They stood there, a yard apart, and the blue morning light reflected on four bayonets, none of them moving.

Yet it was not the four privates who stopped me. Confused as I was, I believe I would have tried to vault the whole Ottoman army. Had I tried, I would have been speared on those straight bits of steel like the little green and yellow-bellied lizards of the East are speared on the beak of the heron. The thing that ended my dash came from the rear, but not in the form of a bullet.

"Mr. Edwards! Stop! Don't be an ass!"

To hear a voice shouting in English, there in the gloom of early morning on that Turkish flying field, with four stolid soldiers lowering their points to my chest . . . it was indescribably weird and uncanny. My feet simply refused to move farther. And almost before my mind was aware I had heard, I had swung round on my heels. I was facing the Turkish major fifty feet away when the four tattered infantry men closed in about me.

Major Osman Omer Bey walked up in a leisurely fashion, stopping to light a cigarette and tossing away the extinguished match with a deliberate movement.

"Fall back!" he commanded in Turkish. The four men retreated a dozen yards and grounded their rifles.

The game was up. Before me stretched an endless vista of days in the *Prison Central*, across the old Roman Hippodrome from Saint Sophia.

The major addressed me in English—in English he must have learned at

the American College in Constantinople.

"My friend, you are a damned poor boxer!" He smiled, very slightly and with an expression almost of sadness. "I shall detain you for five minutes!" And then, as surprise would have toppled me back, the major placed a hand on my shoulder. He continued his strange smile, and his eyes were friendly.

"Look at me, Mr. Edwards. I am a Turkish officer and a Muslim. But the blood in my veins is half Georgian, the other half Kurdish. Once, before the war, I was a subject of Russia."

"Go on . . ." I muttered.

"Mr. Edwards, there was a time, many years ago it seems, when a count came to visit Prince Sherbatoff, Governor General for Russia of all that country south from the Volga estuaries to the Ottoman border. With this count came his one child: his daughter.

"A daughter . . . and her father a count of Imperial Russia! I was a ragged Muslim boy with a faded astrakan cap, boy's size. I stood by the gate to the Prince's grounds—I stood there, and the servants of the Prince would have flogged me for presuming that much—had it not been for her for whom I waited to catch but a glimpse; the daughter of this visiting count. That morning she laughed, and she sent the servants away from the gate to the palace. Mahomet . . . Christ? It was all one to me then, on mornings of spring in the Caucasus."

The major in Moustafa Kemel Pasha's army drew himself up; took his mind from the past; took his heart from the Caucasus Mountains.

"My American friend, Sonya is condemned by her people for treason. The reward which the Soviets offered in Bucharest was also offered in Constantinople, where Sonya remained. What stood between her and hanging? Not the sailor who came to her room; not he surely. Not you either, although you are taking Sonya away from this city where I, many times in the clothes of a spy far more ragged than those I wore when first you saw me, have watched

over Sonya for three refugee years. Last night I followed two people from an Armenian house in Pera to a wharf on the Bosphorus where a motorboat waited in darkness. Mr. Edwards, you are carrying Sonya away from Constantinople—to the first safety in many months of terror.

"That is all—except that you need fear no patrol on the shore of the Black Sea this morning. Go quickly; be thankful!"

Bimbashi Osman Omer Bey, once a citizen of Russia, wheeled and marched away from me.

V

Low over the water of the Bosphorus a great river of white mist turned to pink as the rim of the sun pushed up from the hills of Asia Minor. Dark cypresses grew bright as the sunshine caught dewdrops that clung to the branches; Constantinople was already behind us.

With the motor heralding our approach to two who waited, we wheeled to the west, and the Black Sea was five hundred feet below. Jonescu landed on a strip of beach, the one level spot between the head of the Bosphorus and the western forts of the old Tchataldja line. There was no Turkish beach patrol this day, and the eye went back to the squat oaks and umbrella pines of the Belgrade Forest.

By the shore rode a black motorboat. It was the one the major had seen a few hours before, by a dock on the Bosphorus.

That night I engaged a suite of rooms at the Imperial Hotel on the Vienna *Kartnerring*. Sonya sipped her pale yellow Tyrolean wine, and looked across the table that separated us one from the other.

"Mr. Edwards, why have you done this for me?"

I had waited for that. I was ready. I shook my head and I shrugged my shoulders; gestures, both, that I had learned from the Levantines. "One man might tell you the answer, Sonya.

He is a gentleman, and a major in the army of Turkey. As a boy, he lived in the Caucasus Mountains."

I moved to the door of my room, but Sonya sprang up and blocked me. Her arms were spread and the slim figure in the worn black dress was as taut as a cable with a great weight upon it. Blood rushed to her cheeks and dark eyes shone at me in anger.

"I know what you think! . . . What you thought that night in my room . . . what you have always thought about me . . . because I was a wretched refugee girl . . . and I had to live somehow."

"Really?" I asked coldly. "And the Turkish policeman's grey glove that lay on the floor, that you kicked under your bed when you thought I did not notice; in your room, ten minutes after your friend the spy left you."

"He was there, yes! I did not deny it. But he came as my friend and not as my lover! Until I met Jim he was the only friend I had in Constantinople . . . he was never my lover!"

I smiled. An easy, confident smile, it was, with a background of my cosmopolitan training. "Why lie to me, Sonya? If I thought that, and helped you in spite of thinking it, what is the difference now, in Vienna? I do not blame you . . . I am only sorry for the foolish American sailor who has used all his money in the vain hope of marrying a countess of Russia."

"Ah . . . you know so much of the world!" cried Sonya bitterly. "You think all is complex. You will not believe that I simply love Jim because your experience says that there must be something more to it. That women have motives and plans and mysterious meanings. I know what you are . . . the officers who came to the *Cercle Muscovite* were just like you. I have listened and listened to them 'til the bubbles stopped rising up through the champagne they bought me! You men . . . of the world! You see the tangled forest a mile away, but not the little clear pool at your feet. When I met Jim he made me forget that my life

was caught in the dark forest on the other side. Jim taught me that—and I loved Jim the first time I saw him."

Against my door, with her hands clasping the wood on each side, the figure of Sonya drooped. "You do not . . . you cannot believe me."

"Sonya," I began huskily, but she stopped me.

"There is more . . . much more . . . that you do not know. Jim used to be an American captain."

"What!" I exclaimed. "A captain in the American army?"

"Yes. Jim graduated from West Point . . . the army college in your country. Last night he told me so much for the first time that it is hard to remember . . . many, many words that I turned into Russian as he spoke them. When Jim was in France his mother died. She was his only relative . . . all he had. It was just before the armistice and Jim told me he could not go back . . . because people would say they were sorry . . . because there was a great hollowness inside him . . . because he was alone."

"He got his discharge in France and enlisted as a sailor at Cherbourg. Jim wanted to forget; to be quiet. He did not try for promotion. To the lawyer of the estate he wrote that he would be back in four years. That is the reason why Jim has not had any money. He cannot get any until he reaches America."

There was a long silence; and for me it was hard work to break it. "Sonya, will you accept my apology for all that I said—try to forget that I said it?"

"You don't doubt me now?" she asked in a very low voice.

"No, Sonya . . . no longer." I took her right hand and raised it to my lips. I had the humblest feeling I had ever known.

Once again I moved toward the door and this time Sonya made no move to stop me. "Tomorrow," I said, "we shall walk together in Schonbrunn Park, under the wide trees planted by Empress Maria Theresa. The next day I shall

leave you, and in two weeks Jim will be here. Good night, Sonya."

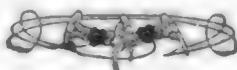
At the corners of Sonya's deep lips there was a shadow of a smile. The pale face above it looked weary.

"There is one other thing, Mr. Edwards."

"Yes." I paused, with my foot on the threshold.

"We were married last night, Jim and I, at the Dutch Chapel, before we went to our motorboat in the Bosphorus."

Sitting at the little table with her chin in her hands, Sonya stared through the window at the lights of Vienna; she stared, but I knew Sonya's eyes saw a far-away husband.



Conclusions en Bordure

By Charles G. Shaw

1. There is no such thing as the joy of living. There is the joy of accomplishment, of sensation, of beauty—but of mere living—no. Living, *per se*, is essentially an irksome business. One involving bitterness, avarice, jealousy, stint—in brief, those very qualities in which there can be no possible joy.

2. What is so empty as shabby gaiety? Surely the razzle-dazzle should have a distinct flair to it; otherwise it should never be attempted. The caviar cannot be too spicy, nor the champagne too dry. Pleasure may dance in the field clad in gingham, and feast upon berries and spring water, but gaiety—a thousand times no.

3. Prohibition note (1): nowadays a man gets pickled, not from drinking too much, but on the contrary, from not drinking enough. For it is spasmodic, irregular drinking that produces intoxication, and the fellow

who regularly and steadily quaffs his ample ration of alcohol seldom arrives at that stage so often reached by him whose opportunities to imbibe are limited, and who consequently attempts to swallow the ocean whenever the slimmest possibility may present itself.

4. Prohibition note (2): the chief difference that Prohibition has actually wrought is that one, nowadays, sits down for a drink instead of standing at a bar.

5. A city is as picturesque as it is behind the times.

6. Definition: actor—a broker of others' emotions.

7. None are so blind as those whose eyes are full of stardust.

8. We say that Such-and-Such is sensible, or interesting, or worth while, or diverting, or clever, or able, or generous, or a splendid type. . . . It is actually only another way of saying that we like him because he likes us.



The Happy Ending

By Nunnally Johnson

I

THE love story of Agnes Felsh and Perry Hunt in its general aspect had become, with the passing of time, a kind of legend in Riverside. Everybody knows more or less of it. It is, in its way, a part of the folklore of the town. And that everybody does not know all of it, completely, is due solely to the fact that Perry was wise enough not to tell it to me for a long, long time.

She is a town character now, Agnes is; not, though, in the way, now, that the term is applied customarily. A quiet, pretty, little child, black-haired and with eyes large and round and forever wide with wonder at what she was seeing and hearing. I had known her for years, since we were in high school together, and once had loved her; but who, in Riverside, had not? The great Something that directs lives had fashioned hers, it seemed, for love. Blindly, dumbly, yes, unconsciously, I do believe, she drifted from one affair to another. Each lasted in its silent, intense way for a few months, until she met Perry, and then ended placidly by the ghostly manner with which she moved into the next. What a joy, I might say, to Riverside she was!

Dumb she may indeed have been, and nobody denied that she was, but it is saying not less than the truth when I tell you that there was no keener girl in town when it came to understanding misunderstood husbands. And Riverside, at that time, was full of them. It was not strange that, with this peculiar genius which she had, she should have

found her circle of gentleman friends presently dominated by married men. They came to her through some instinctive attraction, knowing, it would seem, that in her they would find comfort and happiness and, above all, understanding. She was full of it. Nor was it strange, considering the size of Riverside, that eventually this circle should include Perry; for Perry, as all men knew who were members of the Riverside Lodge of the B. P. O. E., with little doubt was the most misunderstood man in Riverside.

Few of us knew Mrs. Hunt. She remained always in seclusion, never accompanying him to the movies to see Larry Seman or to other such jollifications as the town afforded. All we knew of her was that she misunderstood Perry. That, so we gathered, took up all of her time.

Consequently, and knowing nothing at all of her, I, for one, had little sympathy for her. In fact, it is now, as it was then, a source of some pride for me to have been the one that introduced Agnes and Perry to each other. And this despite the fact that the event marked the end of my season with her, just as it marked the end of all other seasons which were being enjoyed by her little group of misunderstood husbands. For, from then on, she and Perry were inseparable.

We others dropped off. If we asked, hesitantly, at first might we call, we were denied permission. In her sweet, solemn way she indicated that, as sorrowful as the fact was, she could not force herself to interest in anybody but Perry. We understood: Perry was far

worse off at home than we. And we loved Agnes; if Perry pleased her so mightily we were ready to sacrifice ourselves. We were not less, in our way, than noble.

They were so perfectly attuned to each other, so obviously happy together, so much the picture of amorous bliss, that it seemed nothing short of tragic that almost at the outset of their dream old man Felsh should have experienced a touch of conscience.

We all knew old man Felsh, living there alone with his motherless daughter, and appreciated him. Up to then he had been, in my opinion, the perfect father for this dark, dumb daughter. He never pried, he never asked questions; we were welcome, we understood, in his home. Even as Agnes did he seemed to realize the need that these husbands had for understanding and solace, and he did what he could, through the offices of his daughter, to help.

We who called on her from time to time knew him mainly as a fierce and grizzled old ruffian, but big-hearted withal, who was generally choleric over an editorial recently read. If he worked, if he had any kind of a job, if he ever left the house, we saw no sign of it. Invariably we found him, when we called, storming over his newspaper, railing to his daughter over some astounding notation which he had discovered. It was the only circumstance, so far as we ever saw, which claimed any attention from him.

It was his custom, when a caller came, to direct his remarks to the guest, repeating all that had gone before, for a matter of five or ten minutes, roaring, stamping, banging on the table, until, at a soft word from Agnes, he recalled himself, stopped suddenly, and mumbled an apology. Then, at another soft word, he would wink and grin slyly at her, again at the caller, and disappear, not to be seen again.

"He is a fierce old man," we said, "but he is broadminded, and that, in the father of Agnes, is more to be desired than gentility."

He came, then, at the very moment when his daughter's star of love seemed to be attaining its zenith, to this pang of conscience. He came to realize, for the first time, it appeared, that he had sloughed much of his responsibility as a father. Like a stroke of lightning he launched his objection to married men. No more, he declared, would he permit the sanctity of his motherless home to be violated by a herd of irresponsible husbands.

That he should have taken this new attitude, and so suddenly, was, in one way, utterly dumfounding; in another it was about what we might have expected. He had been so liberal, so tolerant, so perfectly the father for a girl who attracted married men, that we had forgot for the time being that he was subject to such outbreaks of temperament. We might well have looked for it, or for any other singular quirk, for that matter, from this unaccountable old scoundrel. We realized it, though, after it had occurred; and we said to ourselves, this is one of his spells; it will pass.

Perry, though, could not dispose of the matter so easily. Since he had come to know Agnes, short though the time had been, he had reached the point where he needed, actually needed, her love and attention, just as each of the rest of us had, one after the other; reached the same point. But Perry's wife, so we heard, was misunderstanding him more and more each day, and Agnes was fast becoming his sole source of comfort.

She pleaded for him with her father, so Perry said. She explained the situation and told him how essential it was that Perry have somebody to understand him, but the old man was adamant.

"People are beginning to talk," he ranted in reply. "It's these married men. They got to go, the whole damned caboodle, Perry as well as the rest. Not another one'll step in this house again. If ever one does, I'm going to break his neck, and you tell 'em that, too."

There was nothing she could do.
"And you, young lady," he went on

to the child, "you got to tame down. I been too soft-hearted. You been getting away with murder. But no more of that. No more of them married men. We got to stop somewhere, you know."

It was pretty severe, and weeks passed and he did not relinquish his stand. We others were able to discuss it almost impersonally, since Perry had excluded all of us through his monopoly of Agnes's attention. But we were cut up about it, just the same, for Perry was very popular. "Poor Perry," we said, realizing how conditions stood in his home. "What will he do now?" However, as it turned out, we might have saved our worry.

II

I SHOULD never have credited Agnes with the courage which she showed in this crisis. She was so still, so quiet, such a timid-looking little person. And old man Felsh, roaring and storming, was a fearsome sight, even as we had heard that he was really a ferocious and merciless fighter. But Agnes showed herself the true heroine for a legend; the courage she exhibited was such as to make the story notable.

In fine, she lied to him; lied like hell to him.

As a matter of fact, though, she was driven to it. Circumstances forced her. In the first place her father's steel edict had left her with no recourse except bachelors, and Agnes, I assume, had been spoiled by her long acquaintance-ship with married men. She could not, try as she might, be contented after that with only single men. And in the second place she was really and desperately in love with Perry. Perry told me so.

It was a crisis in which something had to be done, and done immediately. Action, action, that was what was wanted. And old man Felsh, unwittingly, supplied the suggestion.

"None of these single men good enough for you?" he snapped during one of his endless harpings. "What's the matter with Otto Myrick? What's the matter with him, I'd like to know. Why don't you go with a boy like that?"

Now, Otto was indeed a fine chap. He had lived in Riverside all his life, been graduated from Riverside High School with high honors, among which was membership on the debating team, and was advancing rapidly in his Boy Scout-master work. He was in a law office and was spoken of for city councilman. An upright, clean-cut, 100 per cent worthy young man, and Riverside was proud of him.

"Why don't you go with a boy like that?" old man Felsh repeated, seeing her hesitate.

It seems to me that there was something fine and brave, as ill-directed as it may have been, in Agnes's coping with the situation. The scheme came into her head in a flash, and I doubt if she even considered what effect it might have on Otto, dragged willy-nilly into it. All of her thoughts, all of her interest, was concentrated on Perry. Otto was merely a pawn in a game, you might say, of hearts.

I suppose she knew him. She had never been accustomed, so far as I can find out, to approaching strange men without even the semblance of an acquaintanceship. She was not what you would call forward. But at any rate, whatever the case, Otto called at the Felsh home. Old man Felsh, Perry told me, received him with roars of delight. He clapped him on the back and asked about his mother and, in his delirium of amiability, shoved the Felsh spittoon nearer the guest's chair.

Of that evening I know nothing. Nor does Perry, so he tells me. Otto remained until 10:30 o'clock. Agnes, Perry says, never mentioned how they spent the time. I can judge only by the fact that he never came again that it was not all he desired it to be. But Otto, after all, was only a bachelor.

Anyway, the one visit was all that Agnes wanted of him. The foundation of her little ruse had been laid. When he passed, for the time being, out of the picture, he passed unregretted.

"She must have worked it out in her own little head," Perry said. "I never would have thought of it. But she knew

I needed her, that I was misunderstood at home, and she worked it out. God bless women, don't you say, old man?"

"Yes," I said.

The one visit had firmly fixed it in old man Felsh's mind that the affair was under way. To lie to him, to deceive him, was not difficult at first. He heartily believed her each evening thereafter when she told him that she was going out to meet Otto. He sped her on her way with godspeeds.

"Now," he declared, "this is something like it!"

He took it in high good humor, and if any suspicion ever entered his head when Otto failed to return to the house, he never showed it. It struck him as quite plausible that he should be busy each evening at his office and that Agnes should go to meet him. His daughter had never before deceived him; she had never needed to.

"I don't have to tell you," Perry remarked, "that she was meeting me each evening, do I?"

"No." I said.

Thus, under those conditions, they were happy together once more. But it could not be for long, as we others, at least, realized. Old man Felsh was proud and happy and unsuspicious, but he demanded progress. He insisted that Agnes see to it that Otto was not permitted to get away. He made inquiries daily. And, naturally, she had to report.

"How now?" he'd demand.

At first she indicated that they liked each other. Later they were fond of each other. Presently he was becoming more pressing. His affections increased with each meeting. Old man Felsh roared and swore that she'd be respectable if he had to kill her first.

"He was a beast," Perry said.

And so often as old Felsh forced comment from her the more involved became the intanglement. Eventually —there was no avoiding it—she told him that Otto had proposed to her. That was four months after his one call at the house. The old man was more delighted than ever. He railed at her,

though, for not accepting him forthwith. She conceived an explanation. It sufficed, temporarily, but both she and Perry knew then that they were simply postponing the inevitable.

"We scarcely cared," he told me. "We only knew that we were happy for that moment, at least."

And when come it finally did, it struck with an impact and unexpectedness that stunned them all. I can no more than imagine the scene of consternation in the Felsh home that momentous evening. Agnes herself knew that it was bound, in some way, to end. The game had a limit to it. But not this particular limit did she expect.

I feel in a way, as chronicler of the legend, that as Perry would not or could not describe the scene as Agnes told him of it I am justified in offering my own version. After all, who is there to stop me? I'm writing this story.

They sat, Agnes and the old man, alone, as usual, he reading his paper and she gazing dumbly into space, thinking, no doubt, of an early tryst with Perry. It was with the suddenness of a lightning bolt that the quiet over the house was broken by a blast like the sudden escape of steam from a locomotive. The dark girl's thoughts came back to the room. Old man Felsh, red and seething with strangled words, had sprung to his feet. His eyes, popping boldly from his head, were fixed on the paper clutched in one straining fist.

"Look!"

It was all that he could articulate.

"Look!"

He thrust the paper flat into her startled face. Wonder and awe in her bovine eyes, Agnes took it slowly and looked. Her father's enormous forefinger, almost bursting with the scarlet flush of choler which had suffused his entire body, trembled at a paragraph in a society column.

"Look!"

Agnes read:

"Mr. and Mrs. T. G. Snyder today announced the engagement of their daughter, Bessie, to Otto Myrick, River-

side's well-known young attorney and scoutmaster. . . ."

The girl's knees grew suddenly weak. The room swam rapidly, as though with a trudgeon stroke. The paper dropped from her strengthless hand. This was a contingency beyond anything she had dreamed. Any other emergency and she would have been prepared to stand it. But this! She was on the verge of fainting. Low moans broke from her lips. She put a knuckle in her mouth and bit hard, hard, hard, to keep from screaming.

"The dog!"

It was a blast straight to Heaven. He could say no more. His face became bloated and glistened scarlet. His fury threatened to burst his cheeks and shoot his eyeballs from their sockets. He tried to say something, probably something profane, but his words were strangled. They emerged as Polish words, hence incomprehensible to his daughter.

For a minute he stood clutching the table, gripping it, trying to crush it. Then, baffled, choking, overcome with the futility of words, he threw himself out of the room. A minute later the girl heard the front door slam and the sound of running feet on the sidewalk. Then all was still.

She sat down again. She looked at the fallen paper. Then she resumed her dumb gaze into space.

III

Otto Myrick sat in his office learning to tie a clove-hitch with his eyes shut. Again and again he tried and again he failed, for he was very slow-witted. "Shucks!" he muttered and strove again. But the little knack eluded him. With his eyes open he could do it easily. The instructions in the Boy Scout Manual were brief and lucid. But with his eyes shut, simulating a condition which a scout might have to meet in a dark forest when the enemy was on every hand, he could do nothing.

If only he had stepped to the window about that time he might have seen a

panting figure speeding down Broad Street, laboring under unaccustomed activity. He might have seen this figure, which he would have recognized as that of old man Felsh, father of Agnes, crossing the street rapidly. He might even have seen him enter the door downstairs if he had leaned out far enough. But Otto did not step to the window.

So, when the unlocked door of the room flew open he was surprised and annoyed. Identifying the cyclonic visitor, though, he assumed an hospitable smile. The clove-hitch would have to wait. He rose, extended his hand, and greeted old man Felsh with the words he always used to greet callers.

"Well," he said, "well, well!"

He never spoke again. Those, it turned out, were his last words. Old man Felsh was prompt. Aware, perhaps, of the futility of trying to speak, he said not a word. He simply drew a revolver from his pocket and fired twice. Both shots entered Otto's heart. Old man Felsh was a good shot. Otto dropped, never again to rise. The string with which he had been practicing a clove-hitch with his eyes shut lay pitifully still and quiet on the desk.

IV

"That really is the end of the story," Perry said. "Of course there were some aftermaths but that really was the turning point. After that things became brighter. The old man was tried and found guilty and subsequently was hanged. My wife died a few days later. The whole aspect changed."

"Yes," said I, thinking of a play I had once read. "All's well that ends well."

"Shakespeare," Perry commented. "Yes, everything came our way after that. We have a nice little vine-covered cottage out in the suburbs, a little car of our own, two splendid children, and Agnes and I are as happy as two kids. We had our troubles at first, of course, but what couple hasn't? We weathered them and everything turned out for the best. We aren't kicking."

"Yes," I said, "you've been pretty

lucky. And I'm glad. You and Agnes deserved it."

"Thanks, old man. What I've told you is something I've never told anybody before. But I know I can trust you."

"You can, Perry, to the very end. It's safe with me. Nobody will ever learn it from me. You have my word for it."

He patted me affectionately on the back.



Catch for Cynics, Posturers, Nitwits, Paper Heroes, Ambulating Husks, Petty Tyrants, Sophisticated Adolescents, Certain Very- very Badmen, and Some Members of the American Legion

By Basil Thompson

THE ghouls that rob the graves of men
And feed on the flesh of the dead
Are no less, no more to you than
These buzzards overhead.
For all of fear has gone out of you, sir,
And all of wonder fled—
As you have just said.

O wonder is got of a golden witch
And fear is a fairy's boon,
And the losing of either or both of these
Is the loss of the sun and the moon.
With wonder and fear gone out of you, sir,
The buzzards will mark you soon—
So, good afternoon.



With the "Ski" Left Off

By Julian Kilman

I

THOUGH much practice had rendered Isadore Meiselbaum skilful at gliding, unexpected appearances before their various counters, the sales-girls, too, had developed. Most of them had vision in the back of their little hair-fluffed heads. So it was that Mary Lesnew, at No. 9, in the perfumes, became conscious of the alert black eyes now observing her.

Humming "I'm a Syncopatin' Mama" in accompaniment with the player-piano at the music counter (barely distinguishable in the clashing blare from the Victrola at the other end of the store) and chancing an occasional glance at the row of ten-cent Bill Hart pictures in their rococo celluloid frames on the counter, Mary continued to meet the onslaught of beshawled, cheap-hatted foreign women fingering her wares: thick fingers, slim fingers, gnarled fingers, dirty fingers, and many of them exceedingly quick fingers, required close scrutiny—especially with Izzy looking on. Already that day two ten-cent vanity cases, having the verisimilitude of the drug-store dollar-and-a-half article, had been cleverly filched from the argus-eyed Mary. Compacts, cosmetics and loud perfumes in pencil-like vials she wrapped and delivered with a rapidity of hand that amounted to prestidigitation. "I'm a Syncopatin'"

An old Polish woman tendered a coin.

"It's no good, lady."

Meiselbaum, having taken a position immediately back of the festoon-stand

of larger perfume containers, listened to the stream of foreign words which left the Polish woman. Mary answered her nimbly in her own tongue. A good quarter was produced; the old woman passed on with her tube of scent.

"Some little linguist," remarked Meiselbaum

The well-fed face with its sensuous lips was smiling. Mary, with her bobbed fair hair, thick as taffy, her wide-set blue eyes between the level brows and high cheek-bones idealized by the artist Benda—a Slav countenance, softened, modified, beautified by American birth and nurture—interpreted the look bent upon her. Inwardly chilled, though no doubt unconscious of her inheritance of pogrom distaste, she yet maintained a calm exterior. The ground had been traveled over before; and she had discovered that there were limits: Meiselbaum's word went far in the store. Still. . . . Mary tossed her head.

"She was tryin' to pass a lead quarter," she said casually. As the stare of the man remained on her she continued: "This here, now, dripper ain't workin' right."

Pretending to fumble with the contrivance that, releasing perfume drop by drop throughout the day, filled the air with scent, Meiselbaum brought his pomaded, black hair within inches of the girl.

"Doin' anything this evenin', kid?"

"Me!" exclaimed Mary. "Say, Mr. Meiselbaum, I'm goin' to night-school."

This brought a glance in which disbelief struggled with amusement.

"What you studying?"

"Stenography."

Meiselbaum laughed.

"My God! You can't even spell 'cat'!"

The pendant Egyptian earrings on Mary clicked her annoyance.

"Is that so!"

This was said swiftly. Meiselbaum knew his technique was faulty; and his humorousness fell away like a disused mask. Feasting his eyes on the girlish throat and the swelling contour of the bosom, his voice trembled with an eagerness that was not histrionic.

"Listen," he murmured out of the corner of his mouth, "I'll meet you at the 'Hipp' at seven tonight. You ducked me the first time. Don't do it again."

Mary looked at him coldly.

"Say! What do you take me for, anyways?"

II

PROMPTLY at six o'clock Mary started for home. At the first corner another shopgirl, keeping a supercilious eye on Mary's obviously home-trimmed hat, accosted her.

"Well, Hunkie, you gonna keep the date?"

Mary faced the thin, heavily-rouged but smartly-dressed girl, a long-timer in the store who worked at No. 8 in the candy.

"What date, Miss Know-It-All?"

The candy-girl smiled slyly.

"Other people got eyes besides you Polaks."

Combing her street-trained mind for a retort, Mary gave her inquisitor the up-and-down in good movie style. Her one month on the job in the particular store, while short, had been sufficient to tune her in on all the gossip of the institution.

"What's it to you," she flung back as she started on, "'s long as he ain't buyin' clothes for you no more!"

Half way home Mary digressed into a side street and a moment later ran up the steps of an obscure dwell-

ing. She entered without knocking. An overdressed woman with a double chin met her.

"You're lucky you didn't wait any longer, dearie," she announced. "Two people tried to get the one you chose."

Mary followed into a larger room. Women's hats of many varieties, trimmed and untrimmed, were in evidence. Without loss of time the girl tried on the one she had selected the week before, a small round headpiece of yellow straw that encircled her head like an inverted miniature wastebasket. She tilted it so as completely to conceal one eye and peered into the triple mirror, examining the set of the hat from every angle, to come finally to the study of its effect from the front. A bit of the taffy-like hair, escaping at the sides, completed the frame for her pretty face, illumined with the color of health and innocence.

"Adorable!" murmured the woman professionally.

"Ain't it a peach?" breathed Mary.

From her pocketbook she drew out six one-dollar bills and paid them to the milliner.

With her new hat in its wrapping, Mary started on the short distance to her home. She walked slowly, unobservant of the throngs of men and boys with dinner pails trudging along; the picture the mirror had given her of herself still filled her mind.

Kosciusko Street, into which she turned presently, was narrow and dirty and two blocks away ended, where the New York Central's high board fence cut it off from the railroad. Here were the homes of the proletariat: drab, box-like houses with infinitesimal stoops, and shanties with lean-to tacked crazily onto lean-to. Forlorn trees, ill-nourished from the clay soil, lined the walks and were alive with quarrelsome sparrows; children, thick as maggots, played immemorial games, and, playing, filled the air with shrill cries. Two boys interrupted a game of hit-and-run to punch one another, swearing as they fought.

Mary saw that the smaller lad was one of her several little brothers. She darted into the street.

"You bum!" she cried. "Pick on someone your size."

The older boy backed off, lowering at her. His animal gaze alighted on the bundle Mary held, and he grabbed for it. There was a moment's tussle, the paper tore, and the boy was away, bearing the hat in triumph.

"Catch him, Stan," screamed Mary.

The pursuit carried the myriad children trailing down the block. The fugitive ran fleetly, but as he started in between two houses a young woman caught him. Mary raced up. The boy, his face contorted with anger, twisted loose and flung the hat upward. It described an arc and, sailing free of its wrapping, landed on the bare ground, half mud from the recent release from frost.

With a sob Mary retrieved the hat. Eagerly going over it she found only a slight stain on a portion of the rim.

"Oh, Franciszka," she said to the girl who had helped her. "I'd like to kill him."

In Franciszka's house, a step away, Mary cleansed off the dirt and tried the hat on for the benefit of her friend. Franciszka, of the same age as Mary, but plain of face and dress, exclaimed with disinterested delight. An older woman joined them, and to her, in swift Polish, Franciszka explained the near-disaster. The mother paid little attention to the hat, but instead began frankly to sniff at Mary's clothing, meanwhile blinking her eyes rapidly.

"You smell so good of perfume," she said in her native tongue.

The girls laughed.

"Yes," rejoined Franciszka. "Nicer smell than I get in the factory, but not so much money."

When the hat was once more wrapped up, Mary and Franciszka came out on the stoop.

"Got a date tonight?" asked Franciszka.

"No," said Mary. "Let's go to the park."

At the moment a man came around the corner. He had but one arm and he walked unsteadily.

At sight of her father Mary shrank back.

"I must run home," she said quickly.

III

THE Lesnewski nest was on the same side of the street and Mary made her way thither across the back lots. In the kitchen a woman was bending her body up-and-down, up-and-down, like an automaton, over the zinc-faced washboard; there was the pungent smell of soapsuds; a ten-months' baby, playing on the floor, made cooing sounds.

Quickly Mary placed her new hat in the corner. She spoke in Polish, and not until then did the woman stop work and stand, still half bent and arms resting on hips with fatigue. As Mary regarded the heavy flat features with the knobby cheek-bones and lack-lustre eyes, a feeling akin to nausea came over her. Her mother!

Again the girl spoke, a warning note in her voice. This time there was a gleam of light in the eyes of the woman. She suddenly caught the baby to her.

"Male swotkie serce," she crooned.

The outer door opened and Lesnewski—ex-open-hearth worker, an arm gone, eighteen-hundred-dollar recovery, half to the lawyers, the other half to the "soft" drinkerries—entered. He watched the two women insolently, fingering his wide wisp-like mustaches with the one hand, as he leaned in the doorway.

"Ech!" he grunted, and unexpectedly turned back into the small living-room, where he sat down and removed his shoes.

The mother resumed her labor. After looking on a moment, Mary got her hat, rather furtively passed her father, and went up the stairway to her

bedroom beneath the sloping ceiling. In this was a good-sized mirror, and again she tried on the hat.

She did not hear her father because in his stocking feet his tread had been quiet; but she realized he had come up and was watching her from the hall. Turning, she beheld him come on into the room. He glanced at her craftily.

"You stink goot," he said.

Mary, noting the heavy eye, the face reddened in spots, backed away.

"Drinking again," she accused.

"Sure! Vhy nod?"

"Because you ain't got the money to spend that way."

An ugly look altered the features.

"Hah! I got lots monee. You gif me dol-lar, queek now."

He stuck out his hand.

A look of fear was in the girl's face. She half turned away. This seemed to enrage him.

"You change your name . . . you theenk you're too dam' goot for us. I show you!"

With a quick movement he snatched the new hat from her head and held it aloft. Mary went at him like a wildcat, catching the empty sleeve of the coat and yanking so hard that the man stumbled. But he recovered and knocked her down with a back-hand swipe.

An instant later he was tearing at the hat with his teeth. In a species of

fascination Mary saw the pretty thing of straw and artificial flowers litter the room.

She fell back as if in a daze; then taking her old hat she ran downstairs and into the street. The place was still filled with children; a delivery wagon, driven at breakneck speed by the reckless youth with the reins, sent them screaming to the sidewalks; the game of hit-and-run was interrupted, and Stanislaus, her brother, came up to her. He was a sturdy, pink-cheeked child of eight, and Mary loved him. Now she caught him to her and began to hug and kiss him. In desperation the boy struggled against the caresses; there were cat-calls from his playmates.

"Lemme go!" he cried.

Mary released him and started hurriedly along the walk toward downtown. But Franciszka, who had scented trouble and was on the lookout, overtook her after two blocks. She laid a detaining hand on her friend's arm.

"Mary," she pleaded. "You ain't forgot our date?"

Still walking rapidly, Mary shook off the grasp; her features were working as she faced the other.

"Listen," she said fiercely over her shoulder. "I've told you about Meiselbaum at the store. Well, he's waitin' for me now at the 'Hipp.' You go back home where you belong."



A WIDOW'S advantage is that she can give references which cannot be disputed.



IT is what a woman suspects that generally shocks her most.



LOVE affairs are like jags—perfect if only someone would invent a way to extract the hang-over.

The Yellow Cat

By Nancy Hoyt

I

*"There was not a penny in it
"But a ribbon round it."*

WITH an uncomfortable arm-pulling jerk, Kitty Fisher managed to extricate the suitcase and hat box from under the bunk where they had been neatly stowed, and sat down on the floor to delve into them. The hat box, a round patent-leather one like an over-sized cake tin, unsnapped easily, but the other required some manipulation. Inside was a mass of tissue paper folded around her various possessions and impatiently Kitty rushed through it, pulling this way and that.

"What, no soap!" she cried, thinking reproachfully of her maid in America, and then, realizing that she was quoting, murmured something irreverent about "a great she-bear" when Mrs. Tuttle advanced a cautious head into the cabin.

"Very nice, very nice," said Mrs. Tuttle, nodding vaguely, and withdrew again.

Kitty did not think it—the cabin—particularly nice; it was inside, lighted by glaring electric bulbs and was too small to swing even a kitten in. Deciding to spend all her time on deck henceforth, she made a successful dive into the disarranged suitcase, discovered a lemon-colored wool scarf and a pull-on hat and, armed with several books, started for the deck.

The day was fine and there was very

little motion, but she found herself hurrying up and past the small boys swabbing the checked rubber carpeting of the companionways, and trying very hard not to smell that awful smell peculiar to ocean liners, gymnasiums and Thomas Cook's offices, that smell compounded of fresh paint and stale air, steam heat, linoleum and wet soap powder, which makes ocean travel so difficult for those with sensitive noses.

Arriving on the promenade deck, Kitty stumbled at the doorway and stepped out into the sunlight and fresh salty breeze. She looked around her, drinking in the cool air in gulps like water, but Mrs. Tuttle and her son were nowhere to be seen.

"Thank Heaven," whispered Kitty, still casting anxious glances about in case they should appear suddenly from some hidden corner. Mrs. Tuttle and her dear boy, Ben, were a bit of a trial taken in frequent doses, though it was undoubtedly kind of Mrs. Tuttle to chaperon her across.

She made her way to their deck chairs, which were quite far forward. In fact their position had rather worried Mrs. Tuttle who feared there would be more motion "up near the nose of the boat."

Kitty seated herself in one of the deck chairs, dumped the books in another and made feeble reaches for the steamer rug which had somehow dropped underneath. The chair was most extraordinarily uncomfortable, it was the skeleton of a chair, it approximated an instrument of torture. Just as she

had managed to get hold of one end of the rug, the books fell with a loud clatter from the next chair, and had to be picked up carefully. Then, as Kitty, holding three books in one arm, tried desperately to arrange the steamer rug with the other, there appeared at her side a providential deck steward.

"Good morning, Miss," he said, lifting the books from her arms and laying them at one side, spreading the rug over the bare uninviting bones of her chair, inserting Mrs. Tuttle's pet leather pillow, inserting Kitty, adding another rug and finally, with a dexterous twirl, leaving her neatly encased and confined with a novel in her hands, a comfortable and highly ornamental sausage of tartan-plaid blanket, with a small astonished face at one end.

All this in sixty seconds, at the end of which time he said, "Thank you, Miss," and departed swiftly down the deck.

Repose and warmth gradually crept back and she lay there, lazily comfortable, wondering how anyone could do all those things in one minute, and then say "Thank you" for the privilege. Often she had crossed before, and each time had been newly startled and pleased by the astonishing deftness and courtesy of the stewards. And yet this man was different; the voice or his long thin hands—what was it that made her notice him as a person instead of just as "one of those nice Blue Star stewards?"

Reproving herself for being an idiot, she went back to her novel and read on or watched the ocean for an hour, in which time she noticed her steward rolling up many other ladies with the same efficiency and despatch.

II

BEN TUTTLE came strolling along the deck, dressed in every sport habiliment that the Scotch woolen manufacturers had been able to devise. There were little worsted tassels on his golf stockings, exotic designs on his Fair Isle woolly sweater, a cashmere muffler,

plaided "plus fours," and golf jacket, and in case of cold penetrating these garments, he wore a huge coonskin coat which trailed, collegiate and picturesque, after him.

"They import these things to America," thought Kitty, "sell them to moneyed youths there, and after sojourning at our more expensive prep-schools and colleges, they are taken back to England to acquire a patina of age by a year or two at Oxford or Cambridge." She nodded at Ben, who flopped down in the next deck chair and tried to blow rings from his cigarette.

"Too much wind," he said, annoyed, for it was one of his major accomplishments.

An *objet d'art* that had cost his mother a good deal to turn out in his present splendor, was Ben. St. Peter's, that high-priced and priceless prep-school in New England, had taught him to say, "Is that supposed to be funny or am I only expected to laugh?" in a scornful nasal drawl. It had also taught him how to wear a felt hat turned down on one side in which was tucked a feather game mount, and to look consummately disagreeable when standing in a stag line. It had crowned him with his finest laurels as a prefect in the sixth form and had sent him off to Princeton where his mode of life had changed very little except that it included the upkeep of a battered but expensive car and the acquaintance of a young lady of the chorus, who answered to practically the same description.

His code consisted of a few definite notions; it was all right for your father to do or make anything—coffins, bath tubs, celluloid collars—so long as he was, say the Celluloid Collar King, but it was not all right for you yourself to do anything, except to take a nominal position in his firm or sell bonds. Writing was "running it out," painting was unimaginably awful; architecture was admitted to be semi-genteel but needed too much training. Ben himself was just "looking around." He would

stay in Oxford for a year and then he would "look around" some more.

He crossed one foot over another, smoked silently for a few minutes, and then beckoned with a lordly gesture to one of the hurrying deck-stewards as they passed.

"Look here, Steward, bring me a Martini. Have a drink, Kitty?"

"A cherry brandy, please."

"All right, one dry Martini and a cherry brandy."

"Very good, sir. Thank you, sir," and the steward departed to get the drinks.

"Awfully servile, these men," said Ben, looking scornfully after him. "Very good, sir. Thank you, sir," he mimicked in an affected English accent. "Now, what's the point of thanking me before I've even tipped him? He certainly is servile."

"I don't think so," Kitty contradicted, and then said to herself, "Fatuous ass. The man is a lot more attractive than you are. However, I'm not sure that I'm not the foolish one myself. Ridiculous to notice a steward anyway."

But she found herself looking at him when he returned with the drinks. He was tall, very thin, with the familiar English build of long legs and small waist, which is not the build of the English cockney. . . . Kitty loved the cockneys—their accent, their friendliness, their confidential conversations, but this man was as unlike one as chalk is from cheese. His face, with the slightly hollowed cheek bones, and wide-spaced eyes, the color of pale gold sherry, expressed an amused and ironic detachment, an air of cynic mirth which seemed to say, "This world is a funny place and I am one of its very best jokes." A small fair mustache failed to hide the humorous mouth; under the Blue Star uniform cap, light reddish hair showed clipped short at the temples. He handed the tray first to Kitty and then to Ben. Ben pocketed the change and left a small tip. "Thank you very much,

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sir," repeated the steward, and turned to go.

"Heh, look here," called Ben, "Where did you get that?" he added, pointing at a long line of the colored ribbons of war decorations sewed on the steward's jacket. The man turned at Ben's call, looked down at his jacket, dusted an imaginary speck off the cloth and then, lifting one eyebrow, answered:

"At a seaman's outfitting house, sir," and departed quickly.

"The English certainly are dumb," said Ben. "Why, I meant those decorations, of course."

"Perhaps he thought you wanted his tailor's name," remarked Kitty, dreamily watching the horizon. "I must admit the clothes fit him well. . . ."

"He is a yellow cat," thought Kitty, watching him hurry by, balancing easily two small tea trays in each hand. "He walks by himself, thinking of secret jokes that he alone knows."

"Isn't he like a yellow cat, Ben? One of those marmalade colored cats—you know," she said aloud.

Ben grunted crossly. He was sick of this fuss about a steward, and one can't blame him. Here was one of the least unattractive girls on the ship, a girl his mother had elected to chaperon because of a family friendship, and did she listen to his tales of wild parties on the road to New York and to descriptions of "that time up at the Pré Cat?" No, she talked about a damn steward!

"If you ask me, I think he looks like a cross between a barber and a bellboy," said Ben.

III

As this is not the story of an ocean crossing, but the story of a carefully brought-up and well-bred young woman's sudden impulsive and foolish admiration for a man who by no chance could be considered an available or eligible person to admire, descriptions of the meals in the dining saloon, of rides on the mechanical horse in the gym, are purposely omitted.

The third day out found Kitty a little annoyed and baffled, smoking a cigarette at the end of the promenade deck where the swings and deck games were arranged. She was annoyed at herself and baffled by the Yellow Cat. For he was as coolly elusive and as painfully respectful as the first time he had fixed her steamer chair, yet all the time she was conscious of the fact that he was laughing at them—at all the passengers—and particularly did he seem to cock a humorous eyebrow in her direction, as if to say, "Now mind you don't forget for an instant that you are a young lady and I am nothing but a menial."

Her reverie was cut short by the appearance of the young man himself, who carried in one hand a book.

"Excuse me, Miss, but I think this must be yours. The head steward found it lying on the deck last night, Miss."

Kitty looked at it. "Casuals of the Sea." Of course it was hers and one of her special favorites.

"Thank you very much. I should have hated to lose it," she said, reaching for it.

"Yes, Miss, a pity to have lost it." Then, as if against his will, he said, "One wouldn't want to lose a copy of 'Casuals'."

She looked up, startled.

"Have you read it?"

He answered again as if he spoke unwillingly, "Yes, I've read it."

"And do you read other—other things like that?" she asked.

At this he laughed and seemed to return to cheerfulness and the part he was playing. "Oh, yes, Miss, I read other things like that. Quite an intellectual steward—in fact, a jolly old highbrow. Born of poor but honest parents, as a small boy he early utilized his spare time between stoking the boilers, swabbing deck and er—splicing ropes, by assiduously studying *Magnall's Leading Questions* and the *Swiss Family Robinson*. Behold the result: a

deck steward who is one of the pillars of the Blue Star Line."

Round the turn of the deck by the veranda cafe the ship's doctor hove in sight, dressed in such glittering blue and gold, with so many dazzling buttons that he might easily have been an Admiral of the Fleet.

The steward, for one shocked moment, looked guilty, then quickly, with a repressed grin, said:

"Yes, Miss. Very good, Miss," and fled away. "Lord, what a man!" whispered Kitty, reaching for another cigarette. "What a man. . . ."

Unluckily for Kitty she had been brought up in a community which placed people, not by the things they were in themselves, their manners, or voices, little tricks of speech, thinking certain jokes funny and others nasty, but by what they did. Thus it was impossible to see that Mrs. Fullerton, denuded of her limousine, her house, her dinner parties, and the fact that "everyone" went there, was an exceptionally repulsive old woman; and that it was a shame for Bill Puckney, who was a wonder and a marvel with a discarded automobile and a few spare parts, to be miscast as a lawyer when he loathed law, and loved mechanics.

So Kitty sat there, puzzled and worried, because she could not "place" the Yellow Cat. To her he seemed a little more attractive, a little better bred than anyone she knew, but faced with that great credo of social status learnt at home, the poor child didn't dare admit it to herself. So she arrived at the conclusion that he was self-taught and a very good imitation of the genuine article. Perhaps he only seemed well bred because he was English and she didn't know English people and couldn't differentiate amongst them as she could with her own countrymen.

Pensively Kitty descended to the dining saloon, convinced that she was too troubled to do more than peck at a little food. However, the day being calm, and the cuisine of the *Elliptic* world-famous, she managed to peck at

hors d'oeuvres, chicken and peas, salad, and a sweet before leaving the saloon.

IV

THAT night she lay in her narrow little bed in the narrow little cabin and listened to the sound of the engines beating rhythmically beneath her and the slap of the waves as they slid by outside. Suddenly wanting to see the water, that slapped and then rushed past, she got up and ran down the narrow passage to a porthole which, covered with drops of water and little running rivulets, was impossible to see through. The cold rubber floor chilled her bare feet, so, taking a cautious look up the passage, she ran back to bed.

How unreasonably sad and disappointing everything was! She always hoped so optimistically before every journey that something exciting would happen; almost anything, exciting, but preferably a Russian Prince who would be discreet, respectful and devoted, and yet would incessantly *faire la court*, saying that, since he was now poor and his lands worthless, he could not hope to win her hand, (at this point kissing her hand), but begging her to accept a trifle in token of his love and devotion. At which point he would present her with a beautiful emerald and then fade away conveniently, leaving no address. Kitty remembered the weak laughter and helpless giggles that this dream of an imaginary prince had sent her friend Cintra into.

"Oh, my child," said Cintra, flapping long kid gloves at her. "That Prince fading away and leaving you the emerald—and very respectful of course. Priceless! . . ."

It later appeared that Russian Princes were not always respectful and were, according to Cintra, as grasping a set of men as it was possible to find. Kitty, slightly wearied by Cintra's show of superior sophistication, had to listen while she was told of their universal habit of acquiring rich American wives and then treating them badly.

Since then, Kitty always visualized a procession of admirers from all lands, polyglot-tongued in their admiration, but a procession that was entirely outshone by an immensely rich American youth, "*Blond comme le blé*" (or very dark) who finally won her. . . .

Like a soothing syrup were these dreams of which she partook every night and very seldom had they failed to send her blissfully to sleep. Only tonight the handsome young American millionaire was far less definite a figure than usual and was soon superseded in the major role by one most unfitted for it. Slim, smiling, humorous-eyed, in the uniform of a common steward and balancing two tea trays and a steamer rug in his hands, appeared that entirely unsuitable young man, the Yellow Cat. And through her delicious ante-sleep dream he went, entirely spoiling its soothing quality and rushing at all the foreign princes, potentates and diplomats till they scattered from the scene, when he sat down on the steamer rug and calmly drank the tea. Kitty slept badly that night.

She stood the next morning leaning over the rail and watching the waves foam back from the side of the boat, first frothy white and then an enchanting pale jade before they melted in the intense emerald sea. She kept looking around the deck rather vaguely till Mrs. Tuttle, a fond mamma, very naturally proud of her splendid son, said comfortingly.

"Ben will be up any moment, dear. I guess he's taking a swim—you know how athletic he is. He was on the team—let me see what team was it? Well, anyway, I know, he was on some team, at college."

Kitty nodded listlessly, but Mrs. Tuttle, who was pretty sure she knew another victim of Ben's fatal fascination when she saw one, meandered on without noticing. Finally she decided to take a little turn around the deck, left Kitty and after starting with quite a show of energy, thought she might as

well sit down for a while, and returned to the deck chair.

Kitty fixed the roll of films in her camera and snapped Mrs. Tuttle, whereat the good lady cried, "Oh, my! with my hair all messy too. I just had it washed yesterday." She took a picture of the sea and clouds, and then looking up she saw the Yellow Cat approaching. Pretending to be busy with the camera, she bent over and clicked the little catch at the side quickly. Then with a great show of unconcern, she stared past him and turned the film.

There was, she considered, a developing room on Deck B, where a man did the pictures for you in twenty-four hours. After shooting the rest of the film, much to their surprise, on some children she had found particularly unattractive, she hurried down and extracted a promise from the man to finish it by next day. Conscious of a slight embarrassment as he took the film, she thanked him and dashed away. Suppose he noticed that the third picture was a steward! Well, what if he did? Suppose it was a bad film and wouldn't develop—that would be the best. But as she gained the promenade deck again she knew that she was hoping, foolishly hoping, that the film would prove a good one.

The dancing after dinner was a peculiarly boring amusement, for though the ship advertised in the folder that it carried "a band of professional musicians," amateurs with a little gusto would have been preferable. The song hits of four years ago were executed dolefully by a piano, 'cello and two violins.

"Gawd, for a saxophone and some pep!" murmured Kitty. Besides the wretched music the floor had a disconcerting way of either suddenly dropping away from under you when the ship pitched, or rising rapidly up so that you had to climb a hill. She decided to plead sleepiness and retire to the cabin. Nodding to Mrs. Tuttle who was sitting with a red-haired lady discussing operations, she walked up the stairs and started for the cabin. Out-

side the closed portholes a moon glittered coldly on the sea. She felt headachey, a little dizzy from the cigar smoke and dancing below, so picking up her great white polo coat she closed the cabin door and climbed up to the deck. How dark and silent it was here. Kitty thought of the glaring lights and cigar smoke of the saloon and breathed in the fresh damp air blowing on her face. She made her way forward.

"It's like the name of that jeweler's shop tonight up here: 'Black, Starr and Frost,' Lovely!" she pondered. Lovely, yes, but a little frightening. She began to feel that unpleasant magnetism that affects some people if they look for long down a great height. The rushing black water, carved in a stiff flare at the prow, swished by, silvered by the almost theatrical moonlight. Anyone who stands alone at night staring at the sea begins to feel a little scared, a little lonely, and Kitty, generally the most cheerful of people, felt herself an unusually pathetic figure.

"Oh, it is so frightening," she said aloud and turned to find the Yellow Cat nearly beside her on the empty deck.

His face showed thin and worn in the cold light and his sherry-colored eyes shone nearly like the cat she had mentally compared him to.

"Frightening and wonderful," he said in a low voice. "It makes one a little mad, the sea."

"You say the sea with a capital 'S.' Does it mean such a lot to you then?"

He stared out over the black waters.

"Well, a good deal. You see—Osborne at twelve, then Dartmouth—then the war." He talked in little disjointed jerks and she didn't dare interrupt him for fear he would stop, and yet she didn't understand what he meant. Osborne? What were the places he spoke of?

"The destroyer I was on went down on a night like this. The Mediterranean—but even that's not very warm if one is floating around for hours. I remember I couldn't get hold of the ship's cat, and kept wondering about that

nine lives business. I thought the sea was fed up with me when they 'axed' me, but here I am still with her, only lower down." The moonlight lit the narrow line of blazing ribbons and Kitty advanced a cautious finger toward them.

"Won't you tell me about these decorations?" she asked.

He looked in the direction of her finger, seemed to return to his normal self and then blushed slightly.

"I'm afraid I've been making an awful ass of myself, mooning along like that. One forgets occasionally to behave decently. That was quite insane, boring you that way. Perhaps the war left us all a bit mad."

"Oh, please don't stop. Please talk some more," cried Kitty. She felt perilously near to tears. Was he going to slip away again, elusive as ever? "I do so want you to talk to me."

But regretfully he shook his head.

"You see, it's quite impossible. I mean I shouldn't have spoken to you at all. Instead of answering as I did, I should have said, 'Anything wrong, Miss?'"

"But supposing I'd said 'Yes, everything'?"

"Ah, but you wouldn't. Not if I'd said it in my steward's voice. You'd have said, 'No, quite all right, thanks,' and tipped me perhaps."

"I don't believe I'll ever dare tip you. You're too frightening," said Kitty.

"I'm afraid that's why I do this work. One makes quite a lot on tips. However, if you don't mind I'd prefer you not to. Perhaps you'll take this from me, though, as a memento of your conversation with a mad steward one night, and tip me with a crooked sixpence in exchange."

He held out a small silver coin. In the dark, Kitty could just make out the marking and saw with startled surprise that it was a coin of ancient Greece. She fumbled in her handbag for the change.

"That thripenny bit will do nicely, thanks," he said, picking it out of her

hand, "since you haven't a crooked sixpence handy."

They stood there in the moonlight, each with a little disc of silver in their fingers. Then he walked over and pulled back the heavy door of the companionway for her.

"Good night, Miss. Thank you very much," he said, reverting suddenly to a slight cockney accent and an expression of bland stupidity.

"Good night," she answered and stepped quickly through the door.

"Oh, God, what a mix-up!" whispered Kitty to herself. "Everyone in the wrong place, everything in a mess." With a shuddering intake of breath, she dropped on the narrow berth and lay sobbing convulsively.

V

BUT mornings have a habit of reappearing and with them cheerfulness and a freedom from the dreams of moonlit midnight. Next day everyone wore an end-of-the-voyage look and even the seasick grew happier at the prospect of landing on the morrow. People who planned to get off at Cherbourg were already arrayed in their city clothes, sport hats and woollies cast aside for grander garments, veils and high-heeled slippers. Ladies went around slightly worried at the intimacies they had contracted with common people on the trip and snubbed poor Mrs. Keagle from Oshkosh in order to keep her from presuming on their acquaintanceship when they reached Paris.

Everyone was very busy and so Kitty found an empty corner of the deck where with cold and trembling fingers she opened the packet of snapshots. It was such a good one, too, when she snatched it from the others. A very perfect likeness of a very nice looking young man. She decided to show it to him and found him stacking deck chairs on the other side.

"I wanted to show you this," she said, feeling very shy at seeing him again.

He looked at the little photograph in her fingers and then took it from her.

"When was this taken?" he asked, looking rather serious.

"I snapped it yesterday, but if you don't want me to keep it, I'll give it to you to tear up."

He turned the snapshot around and around.

"But do you really wish to keep it?" he asked finally.

She nodded.

"Then please do. Though why you should—oh, Lord, there's such a lot of things I want to say and I can't say any of them!"

She nodded again. One large tear kept coming up to the edge of her eye and was only forced back by the sternest resolution.

"If I could make you understand just why—" But at this point an old man charged around the corner of the deck shouting, "Hey, steward!" and he dropped the photograph and ran.

Kitty picked the picture up and walked slowly inside. She went down, finished packing and then went in to lunch where this time she really did peck listlessly at the food.

After lunch Mrs. Tuttle claimed her help with their steamer trunks and jettied chiffon and beaded georgettes had to be folded and packed carefully with layers of tissue paper to keep them from crushing. When Kitty again reached the deck the Yellow Cat was not in sight. The place had a deserted appearance for all the deck chairs were neatly stacked and everyone was grouped at one side looking eagerly for land. Kitty borrowed Ben's binoculars, but found the blue haze which showed at the horizon singularly unexciting.

"Fine to see land again, isn't it, Miss Fisher?" asked a genial gentleman from Chicago.

"Perhaps," answered Kitty cryptically and relapsed into gloom which lasted all through the evening. After elaborate farewells to friends disembarking at Cherbourg, Mrs. Tuttle shepherded her to bed and said to Ben,

"Now, Son, you better go, too. Remember you've got a long, hard day tomorrow."

* * * * *

THAT chill and shivering hour when the ship reached Southampton found Kitty mechanically getting up, dressing, straightening her bags and hat boxes and arranging with nerveless fingers her hair, which unaccountably refused to be fixed this morning. Presently she went up and reluctantly admitted that, though cold, the morning was beautiful and Southampton Water, in the early morning opalescence, a very lovely sight.

"Oh, to be in England now that April's everywhere else but it's still winter there," misquoted Kitty crossly. Most of the people had left the ship at Cherbourg and a scant gathering met on the dock for farewells. She kissed Mrs. Tuttle good-bye, thanked her for her kindness, and departed in search of the village taxi which Miss Metcalf and Miss Tate had promised would meet her. There it was, drawn up outside the pier, and a familiar rosy-faced man whom she recognized as the erstwhile village livery stable proprietor jumped out and took the smaller bags from her hands.

"Cool morning, Miss," he said, touching his cap, "but it'll be a fine day later."

Kitty smiled and inquired after the old ladies.

"Very well, Miss, and sorry they couldn't be 'ere to meet you, but I 'ad to make an early start, not knowin' when she'd dock," he indicated the huge bulk of the *Elliptic* lying quiescent at the pier while the great booms groaned and clanged unloading her.

"We'll make Fernley in an hour, Miss," said the driver, and they started.

V.I

FERNLEY was a little village in the New Forest near Syndhurst, a village so classic in its social structure, so un-

changing in its inhabitants, that were it not for a few motors instead of horses it might have stepped, if villages can be said to step, out of the pages of "Cranford" or "Kate Greenaway." Along the charming lanes of Southern Hampshire they went, through thorn hedges just breaking into flower, fresh with dew. Behind them she heard the bells of Southampton ringing faintly, and those chimes seemed to play a delicate and dreary little farewell in her heart as they hurried on. But who could be anything but pleased at the sight of the furry little New Forest ponies galloping away in timid flight when the motor passed, and who could resist the fat thatched cottages of white cob surrounded with theatrical picture postcard flowers and dark privet hedges tipped with new pale green leaves? . . .

And when they arrived at Fernley there were Miss Metcalf and Miss Tate, as unchanged and immutable as if they had been kept in a crystal ball for the years that she had not seen them. Dear Miss Metcalf, so perfect in her Victorian black silk and cap, and still more dear Miss Tate, always the "sporty" one, in tweeds and a mannish felt hat over her clipped grey hair! They ran forward to the gate of the Dower House as the car came in the drive and met Kitty with such apparent joy that she quite cheered up. The Dower House, a beautiful old Georgian house of dull red brick and white stone, had really been sold as a separate property from the manor many years ago but the old ladies preferred to retain the name when they bought it.

Two sealyhams, sporty and square-legged (looking a good deal like Miss Tate, it must be admitted) frisked excitedly around them as they made their way inside.

"Is it Fidèle still, Miss Metcalf?" Kitty asked.

"No, dear, this is Fidèle's daughter and grandson. We call her Perf—Perfidy, you see—because she is so naughty."

The sealyham stared reproachfully at them.

"Good dog, Perf," said Miss Tate, consolingly, and the sealyham wagged a stumpy tail and barked hoarsely.

Breakfast was a marvelous meal with two kinds of honey, the dark heather honey full of flavor and tasting of hot sun, and the first pale gold apple-blossom honey, very sweet and delicate.

There were hot scones and cold toast, strawberry preserves and Devonshire cream, and two covered dishes simmering on a fascinating hot table.

"We couldn't manage any really good coffee, dear," said Miss Metcalf, looking guilty.

"Though we knew Americans were very fond of it and so we bought a special machine," added Miss Tate.

"But the trouble was"—Miss Metcalf speaking helplessly—"that we simply couldn't work it at all and thought we'd wait till you would show us how," Miss Tate interrupted.

"It was so complicated, you see. All glass and bits of metal when we unpacked it." And Miss Metcalf indicated the dismembered parts of a percolator on the sideboard.

Afterward they walked together through the garden to the shed where the ladies kept their garden tools, each set painted a different color to tell them apart, and then to the kennels to inspect some comparatively new and exciting puppies of Perf's. Before lunch they made her lie down and rest, "such a tiring journey across the Forest after that long voyage, dear," and then afterward they walked down to the village to send a cable to Kitty's family. Coming back about four o'clock, Miss Tate told Kitty all the village news and gossip. How little changed it seemed! There were tales of the thrilling experience of Mrs. Brock who was sure she'd seen a thief in the kitchen garden one night, of the last village fair, and the shocking history of the young lady from London who had refused to teach a class at Sunday School because it was a bore. Finally the real plum, that feud between the Admiral—"you remember Admiral Fitz-Stacy, Kitty"—and the

new Vicar who was, it seemed, a *leetle* High Church.

"And the Admiral does so object to incense and the vestments he uses." Miss Tate thought the Vicar rather a nice young man. . . . However, the Admiral was evidently the dictator of conduct in Fernley although he had lost all his money and lived entirely on his pension. "Perhaps you remember Denis, his son. He used to be a midde when you were here last. I believe he had to take a position in the Merchant Marine. They cut down the Navy terribly last year, you see—very sad for the young officers without money, of course."

Kitty didn't remember Denis but pretended to, and laughed secretly at the annals of the village gentry which so excited the old ladies. Nevertheless it was a darling spot, Fernley, and she went to sleep between smooth lavender-scented linen sheets with the cool night air of the New Forest pouring like water over her window sill.

* * *

NEXT morning the old ladies made elaborate preparations for church, Miss Tate substituting a striped silk shirt-waist for her much-washed cotton one, and Miss Metcalf adding a very stunning bonnet, vintage of 1870, ornamented with jet dingle-dangles, to a particularly rich and rustling black silk dress. Off they started in Jenkins' taxi with Kitty primly seated between them, also dressed in her best.

The church was an old one and very beautiful. Choir boys, no doubt fiendish on week days, but fair as little angels in their white cottas, sang in sweet and piercing voices.

Kitty slipped into the pew beside the old ladies and looked cautiously around her. All the village worthies were there, seated about them, and she recognized in a scarlet-faced and corpulent old gentleman with a militant mustache the redoubtable Admiral of the story. Then with a shock that seemed to pull all reality away from her she saw standing beside him in shabby but perfectly cut tweeds, a tall slim figure, thin-faced,

humorous-eyed, sandy-haired—the Yellow Cat! Quite suddenly her knees swayed under her and she slipped down into the first faint of her life and lay there, crumpled sideways in the pew.

"What's this!" snorted the Admiral, "child fainting? It's that damned incense! How may times have I told Lawrence to stop using the stuff. Look here, Denis—" But Denis was already in the old ladies' pew helping Miss Tate to carry out the small wilted object that Kitty had become. In the porch of the church he took her in his arms, calling back to Miss Tate that he would take her back to the Dower House directly.

But they didn't reach the Dower House quite as soon as that.

Kitty struggled back to consciousness and opened heavy eyelids as Denis' little silver and grey car sped along between high hedges. She contemplated his serious profile for a moment.

"Why didn't you tell me?" she asked weakly.

"Because the other is really true. It's not a bet or a joke or anything. And this part is only three days of every month." He indicated the car and the countryside with one hand.

"If I'd only known," she whispered over and over again. He ran the car up a path and stopped under a tree of May just breaking into little white perfumed flowers.

"How could I tell you all about it? You wouldn't have believed me and besides I've had to keep shut up about it because of the aged parent. He thinks I'm a junior officer on one of the smaller ships. Luckily the people in this blessed village never travel or he'd hear somehow. You see, we lost all our money and when the Navy kicked most of us out it was the only job I could get. Strangely enough one makes quite a lot of money—tips and things. But it's hardly a decent employment."

"Anything's decent if *you* do it," said the shameless girl facetiously.

Alan Denis Fitz-Stacy blushed a deep red. "Besides, you see though a deck-steward makes enough to support

a wife, not in affluence, but still, enough, he's hardly in a position to offer himself, is he?"

Then Kitty replied in a very quiet voice, staring straight at the blossoming May.

"Fortunately it happens to be Leap Year."

* * *

So the Admiral improved his health if not his temper by walking three miles back from church, and as for Kitty, that foolish and impulsive girl promised or rather insisted that she was going to "very imprudently marry the barber." . . .

But if you cross on the *Elliptic* now, don't look for the Yellow Cat any more, for one of the directors of the line after conversing with him the greater part of one afternoon transferred him to Third Officer on a smaller ship plying between—but that you'd rather find out for yourself.

And Kitty's favorite possession is still the snapshot of Denis, the Yellow Cat (she still thinks of him as that) in the steward's uniform. Kitty, in fact, is now agitating to have him change the Fitz-Stacy crest, which is rather an old one, to two tea-trays *rampant* and a deck-chair *couchant*.



Soul

By Helen Hoyt

HOW can she smile
With lips immovable?
How can she thrill
Whose heart unbeating lies?
How can she love
And all her blood is cold,
Or how be sorrowful
With tearless eyes?

*O flesh, the soul is yours;
If you be silent, if you be numb—
What is there that endures?*



The Speeders' Court

By Elizabeth Leitzbach

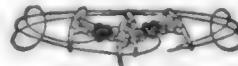
MY heart is an old woman
With crooked back
And wrinkled face
Lost on a busy street corner,
Bewildered by speed-mad drivers.
* * * * *

Why must men hurry so?

Women

By George Briggs

WOMEN . . . women. . . . How odd they are, how diverse, how different. . . . Women with innocent eyes who are not innocent. . . . Women who wear expensive-looking clothes, but who are not expensive . . . Cheaply dressed women whose income is stupendous. . . . Beautiful women with freckles, or moles in unexpected and damnable spots. . . . Motherly-looking women who are single. . . . Single women who are mothers. . . . Women . . . women. . . . How odd they are, how diverse, how different. . . .



Fire-Play

By Mavis Clare Barnett

SOMETIMES we play at making love;
 You kiss me on the ear,
I rumple your straight eyebrows up
 To make you look severe.

But when our play is merriest
 Your grave eyes look at me,
Until we're clinging mouth to mouth
 Very solemnly.



Hope

By Charles S. Zerner

THE day passed without a letter from her. There had been none yesterday, nor the day before,—not a word since she had gone two weeks ago. And none had come today!

He paced the floor restlessly, thinking about it. His brow was corrugated in perplexity. Suddenly he halted his agitated steps. Then he said aloud: "Well, I think I'm definitely rid of her!"



The Blue Virgin

By Frederick Reeves Ashfield

WHEN Shane returned from the city, instead of remaining there to make his fortune, it was because some woman had hurt him grievously and to the soul, for he never had a word for a woman after he came back, and would turn his face away when a girl smiled at him, which would be often, for Shane was a fine-looking lad in those days.

Saying not a word to anyone, he took up his living in a little cave that was under a hill there, walling in the front of it and making a door to it and a little window. And soon after came a cart-load of books from the city with a box the size of a child's coffin on the top of them. When the box was opened outside the door, those that were standing around saw an elegant statue of Our Lady, a fine new image of Herself, with a gold crown on its head and it wearing a robe painted the color of the sky on a sunny day.

And Shane set the statue into a niche he had dug into the side of the cave, and went on living there all by himself and with no woman to care for him. Soon the big books were scattered around and piled that high he would be reading there by the wee window and you not seeing him as you passed by on the road.

But lovers walking home very late at night and poachers creeping back early in the dawn would see his candle light flickering on the wall and hear him mumbling outrageously long prayers to Our Lady, with a pause now and then to call down curses upon the beauty of women; curses upon the false glory of

their hair, the deceitful glance of their eyes, and the evil-meaning smiles painted by the devil himself on their red lips and all.

When he went about, which was seldom, he would answer civil if a man passed the time of day with him, but not even a glance had he for any woman, which hurt them sore, especially the pretty ones who expect admiring smiles even from a blind man. Soon he was a joke and a by-word to all of them, excepting only Mora, who lived down the road a bit in a wee cottage with her old mother, as neat as a pin. Aye, a quip and a quib Shane was, but she never joined in the laughs at the poor daft lad nor mocked him. Heavy sorrow was in her heart for Shane to be the way he was, living all alone there in a dirty cave, and he was such a fine scholar, and with no woman to care for him.

And there wasn't a girl in the parish but what envied Mora her white arms and clear skin and the walk she had of a high queen. Her hair went to her waist and it the brown of old honey with glints of gold in it, and her eyes were wide and blue as the cornflowers that blow among the wheat. Many a lad was after her, but she tossed her head at them all, for Shane was in her heart and had been since they had ran together when they were small.

* * * * *

So far was he in his books, searching ever for new and strong strange words against the deluding beauty of women, and so busy with his prayers, that it was little thought he had left for eating

or for drinking and it was not long before he was as gaunt and as bony as a pike. No doubt he would have starved entirely only that Mora used to steal over early in the mornings with a jug of sweet milk and a little pile of oat cakes to be leaving them on the flat stone by his door. She would stand there unknown to him with her hand upon her heart to hush its loud beating as she listened to the daft fool reading curses against the evil beauty of women from his black books that named their members plain and the particular sinfulness of each, until Mora's cheeks burned with shame and anger and the tears would come into her eyes because of Shane believing their false lies, the poor daft lad.

It was soon the small girls had a game to be standing out in the road and calling to Shane to come out and kiss them. And they would give him all the fond names women have for their lovers, until he came tearing out of his cave like a touched man, with a shake of his fist, aye, and many a stone after them, and calling them names that no girl should ever be named. Mora, standing in the door of the wee cottage down the road, would hear them and sigh, knowing him to be sick in his soul but a fine lad, and wishing there was a way to be curing him. But she was not one to rest content with wishing and many a long thought she had over it.

The way came to her when she happened into the town one day and saw a grand chart of colors on a card in a window there. Every color you could name was on the card and some you'd never heard tell of, but Mora saw only one, and it a blue that was the color of the sky on a sunny day and the same blue as the robe of Our Lady. A blush warmed her cheeks at the thought she had and she smiled to herself. But without hesitation, she went into the chemist shop and asked the man there about the color on the chart and would it dye linen as well as silk. Aye, it would and better, he told her, and he gave her the way of it. So she bought

a packet and hurried home with it hidden away against her heart.

She got out one of her mother's few linen sheets from the chest in the corner—soft and fine and old it was and as thin as silk. She took water from the kettle and she dyed the old sheet properly as the man had told her and then she dried it by the fire, taking care that it was seen outside by none.

The next morning she was up before the dawn and a trembling came over her thought not from the cold, for it was in the summer. For a long while she knelt by her bed there and then she went about doing what was necessary as quiet as a cloud in the twilight, not wanting her old mother awake to be questioning.

* * * * *

THAT same morning, before it was light enough to see the nails on your fingers, Shane was awake and praying as usual, and an hour after, he was keeling there still, his head bowed before the statue of Our Lady in the niche on the wall. He had finished all the prayers he could think of for the minute and had his head still down in meditation, when out of the corner of his eye he saw a little white foot resting lightly as a bird upon the doorstep. He raised his head then and crossed himself, beginning to tremble like a struck man, for there in the doorway, the doorway he had nailed together with his own hands, stood Our Lady herself in her blue robe and the rising sun was a golden halo behind her holy head.

When Shane saw who it was there, his heart went that high up in his throat that it held him from breathing and he gasped as he stared up at her, partly from awe of her Beatitude, but more from joyful pride that Herself was appearing to him in a vision, and he bowed down and worshiped.

She stood there, swaying as if from weakness and smiling down upon him pityingly. Then she held a hand over him and spoke. Her voice was low and solemn and sweet as she said: "It is often I have listened to your prayers, Shane, and sweet it was to hear them,

but you soiled them and spoiled them by the horrible strange curses you always said after."

"Shame should be heavy upon you for the curses, Shane," she said. "Your prayers were like innocent white flowers, but the curses were like throwing them into the gutter. And tell me, why do you be always cursing the beauty and all of women?"

She stopped. As he knelt there and not daring to lift his head, Shane began to falter out things that cannot be told, things about a woman he came to know in the city and the way she used him and the sport she had of him until his very soul was an evil sore. His voice went to less than a whisper as he said the worst of it. And as she who stood there heard him through, she shuddered at the vileness of it and the shame that woman had put upon all of them, but when he was done, she spoke again, trying hard to hold her voice steady.

"And must all women be condemned because of that one who brought shame and sorrow upon you, Shane? Evil is in those black books of yours if they tell you so. Women are both good and bad," she said, "the same as men. And how can beauty be evil? Was not I a woman and with the body of a woman? I have been called comely. Look at me, Shane!"

With that, she drew off her blue robe and held it in one hand as she stood there before him in the splendor of her white body with the sun making a golden mist around her in the doorway. Trembling, she stood there, with the blue robe clutched to her breast, and more than mortal tall she seemed as she stood in the low doorway, and more than mortal fair. Reverently he knelt there and was like to faint from her loveliness, for to the poor daft lad she seemed that ideal woman that was hid away in his heart, despite his curses; the mate of his dreams that is in the heart of every man worth the name. As he looked upon her, a blush seemed to rise on her white body and travel ahead of his eyes like the shadow of a cloud on a meadow, from her little

white feet to her blue eyes that could not look at him.

Then, crying her mercy for the slights he had put upon her with his words against all women, Shane fell at her feet and would have touched her blue robe that trailed out toward him, but he dared not. And she tried to speak again but could not. Then her voice came and she said:

"So now you believe that there are good women in the world. Women that are here to be the mates of men and the mothers of their children, women like—like Mora. Go to her, Shane, and I am not doubting that she will make you the man I am wishful of you to be. Will you forget the shame that evil woman put upon you and go to Mora? Will you do that for me, Shane—darling?" and she swayed over him and would have touched his head, but stayed her hand. And with his face to the ground, he swore to do whatever she would have him do.

* * * * *

WHEN he dared to raise his eyes, she was gone, but Shane did not mind that for all his thoughts had gone back to Mora and how they ran together when they were small, and his heart hurt that he had cursed her when he cursed all women and him knowing all the time that she had been leaving food at the door for him.

So he jumped up and went out without noticing the print of little bare feet in the dust of the doorstep nor the jug of milk and the oat cakes there on the flat stone. And he ran off down the road to the wee cottage where Mora lived with her old mother. He rapped upon the door with no thought of it still being early dawn and no time to be calling upon a girl.

When the old mother opened the door, there is no doubt that she was surprised to see Shane standing there and him to be speaking her so civil after the way he had been passing them by without a word or a look, but, being a wise old woman, she asked him into the house politely, setting a chair for him

without question, and she called to Mora.

She was a long time, minutes that seemed hours to Shane as he waited, but when Mora came in, startled and shy at the sight of him, he knew her to be the most beautiful thing in the world. Not knowing what he was doing, he held out his arms to her, his eyes with tears in them.

"Mora, darling, will you have me?" he said.

Being a woman, she said him no at once and wanted to know however he dared to come to her with such a question after the way he had never given her that much as a good-morning since he came back from the city months ago.

But, seeing his head go down and the tears in his eyes and her loving the poor daft lad more than anything in the world and being a woman, she went to his arms. But it was little of love-making there was to be for the two of them

for Shane fainted with the fever that was in him and from lack of food. And Mora put him to bed as if he were a child and she nursed him tenderly.

* * * *

PERHAPS, sometime, as they sat together before the door of their wee cottage of an evening after the work of the day was done, Shane told Mora of the vision he had of Our Lady in the dawn, but morelike, being a man, he said nothing at all about it. It is sure that he never had sight of the fine old linen sheet that was dyed as blue as the sky, for Mora burned it in the fire, to her old mother's great distress, she being of a saving nature and it being the sort of linen you cannot buy nowadays. Anyhow, it is known that Shane and Mora lived together for a long while and were as happy as two can be together in that country, which is very happy indeed.



Here a Little

By Peter Kerrigan

THE girl who insists on being respected has plenty of time to sit home and enjoy her success.

* * *

THE reason people think they can't make both ends meet is because they want them to lap over and fasten with a diamond buckle.

* * *

REPENTANCE springs not from the heart but from the headache.

* * *

LOVE is a game in which only those who lose escape with their stakes.



A Joke on Jason

By Sterling Beeson

MRS. ALLBRIGHT had read enough popular novels to know exactly what to do when she found the dainty handkerchief and the card case in the tonneau of the family car. The find was a confirmation of suspicions which she had entertained since even before marriage,—to wit, that all men are triflers.

That afternoon she knocked on the door of an apartment in a quasi-fashionable part of the city. She might have pushed the bell button and announced herself through the speaking tube, but she wanted to get in.

The door was opened. Mrs. Allbright entered determinedly.

"Is this Mrs. Jewell?" she asked.

The lady who had opened the door admitted the identity.

"Well, here are your card case and handkerchief. Also I'm telling you that I know all about your night rides with my husband and your other doings. I just wanted to get a look at you. You look as though you could stand a shock. Believe me, you're both going to get one."

Mrs. Allbright then made a quick exit.

* * * *

JASON HAZELBURN was the hard-boiled vice-president of the largest bank in town. He had just turned down an application for a loan, and set the necessary machinery in motion to get a friendly receiver appointed—friendly in that instance meaning friendly to the bank.

The phone light on his desk glowed intermittently. He picked up the re-

ceiver and said, "Yes, Hazelburr talking."

"Is this you, Jason dear?" said a feminine voice.

Jason looked around furtively.

"Yes," he said in a pianissimo tone, "what is it?"

"Listen," said the voice. "Your wife was just here. She had my card case and handkerchief. How in the world she got them I can't imagine. She knows all about us."

"My God!" muttered Vice-President Hazelburr. "What did you tell her?"

"I didn't tell her anything. She didn't give me a chance to say anything. She just handed me the things and said you and I were in for a rough ride. Then she beat it out. Oh, what'll we do!"

Mr. Hazelburr sensed a rather insincere solicitude in the query. His actively financial mind quickly picked out the values in the situation. He knew that Mrs. Jewell didn't have even a reputation to lose. He had met her only recently, but already felt pretty well acquainted. He knew that he had a reputation and a quite plethoric accumulation of ill-gotten gains, both of which seemed to be sneaking away.

"Good God," he mumbled. "What did she say? Tell me all you can."

"Just that she knew all about our night rides and all our doings. That she only wanted to get a look at me, and that she was going to start something. That positively was all. Then she went before I could even open my mouth."

"Well," said Jason, "I must think about this. I may call you. In the meantime admit nothing to anybody. Don't even talk."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," wailed the voice at the other end. "Oh, what will I do?"

Jason hung up.

"What'll you do?" he muttered. "You'll do plenty, I'm sure of that," and he turned wearily to the stack of papers on his desk.

Automatically he shuffled them. Force of habit chained him to his chair for a few moments. Then he summoned the senior office boy.

"I'm not feeling well," he said. "Please don't admit anybody."

Alone in his office he stared moodily at his desk pad, fearfully expecting sensational developments any moment.

"My God!" he said two or three times. "I'm sunk."

* * * *

MR. ALLBRIGHT was bustling nervously around his office when his wife came in.

"George, I want to see you a minute," she said rather huskily.

He looked at her with evident surprise, and led the way into his private office.

Seated, she looked at him, then began to sob.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked with just a trace of annoyance in his voice.

She told him.

Mr. Allbright was accustomed to deal vigorously and decisively with all kinds of situations. He pushed a desk button. A girl entered with a notebook.

"Miss Stiggs," he said, "please bring me a transcript of the depositions you took here last night at the Hill Brothers conference."

The girl returned presently with a thick handful of typewritten sheets.

"Get Gesler's garage," said Mr. Allbright tersely.

He picked up the telephone and waited.

"Mr. Gesler, please. Say, Harry, what do your records show about my car last night?"

"Washed, greased and eight gallons of gas," he repeated.

"Was it out of the garage? Oh—it was, eh?"

"Now listen, my dear," he said as he pushed the typewritten sheets across the desk. "Here is a verbatim record of a meeting that I attended last night. There were no less than sixteen well-known people present. We all went out together at twelve-fifteen this morning as these records show. I was home, as you know, at twelve-forty-five. You've simply got me wrong. Some garage porter is using our car as a taxicab. Do you want any more proof? Really I'm busy this morning."

The alibi was overwhelming. Even a jealous wife admitted it. She dried her tears, smiled and said, "Ain't it funny?"

* * * *

JASON HAZELBURN climbed wearily out of his limousine in the *porte-cochere* of his home. He stood on the stone steps a moment. Then grimly he turned the door knob and entered.

Jason had done a lot of fast work that afternoon for a man whose nervous system was in a worse tangle than a home-made radio. He had liquidated, at heavy loss, a lot of promising industrials, called in a lot of loans and converted every nickel he could get his hands on into non-registered liberty bonds. These he had carefully secreted. The house and lot and other realty he couldn't hide. He figured that when his wife and Mrs. Jewell got through with him that he would need every cent he had succeeded in saving. The loss had been terrific, but when one's house is burning one must save what one can pitch out of the window.

Jason feared the scandal even more

than the financial loss. Also he feared the unpleasant scenes that were sure to ensue. He had been a conspicuous figure in the city's social, industrial and financial life for more than a quarter of a century and here in his old age, after more hair-breadth escapes than Daniel Boone, he had stepped on a banana peel.

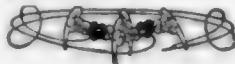
He hung his coat and hat in the vestibule closet and walked into the living room with a faltering step.

"Why, Jason dear, you look sick,"

said his wife as she glanced up from her tatting. She was an old-fashioned lady and had never given up those little domestic pursuits which she of necessity followed in the days when Jason was only a shipping clerk in a wholesale grocery. Her tone was natural and sympathetic. Her eyes were kindly.

Vice-President Hazelburr staggered into his favorite over-stuffed chair.

"I am," he said weakly.



The Wall

By Faith Baldwin

*I BUILD a wall between my soul
And verity's demand,
A patchwork wall, a barrier
Unstable as the sand.*

*Blue teacups, and a lustre bowl,
Books, bound in scarlet suede,
A footstool, rich with petit-point,
Three figures, carved in jade;*

*A candle-stick of cloisonne,
A rotund, silver clock,
A handkerchief of convent lace,
A sable-smothered frock . . .*

*I plaster up the chinks between
Each frail, unmatching two,
With quaint, adhesive memories
For mortar, mixed with dew.*

*The memory of winter moons,
Of stars, caught in a tree,
Of stranger voices in a crowd,
Of flying fish at sea . . .*

*And so I, piecemeal, build my wall,
My soul behind it sits,
And wonders when sledge-hammer life
Shall smash it into bits!*



The Adversaries

By L. M. Hussey

I

IN the days before the overthrow of President Ignacio Andrade there was a plantation near El Callao so large that three days scarcely sufficed a horseback rider to travel from one extremity to the other. The owner, old Don Carlos Monagas, had instituted a good discipline among his dependents, who numbered more than a thousand. Their village of mud-plastered dwellings existed about a mile from the hacienda. Each family had the usufruct of a small patch of cleared land and Don Carlos not only insisted that the natives serve him well, but he forced them to serve themselves. On the days allotted them for their own work he used to ride down to the village on his sorrel stallion and oversee the tillage of their gardens as if it were to his own profit.

Old Monagas was feared both by the timorous and the bold. In the concluding years of his ownership he seldom visited the village alone, but came accompanied by his daughter, whose horsemanship would have done credit to a man, and who derived from her deceased mother a heritage of beauty and from her father a uniquely feminine fearlessness.

The advent of this pair, father and daughter, was an invariable stimulant to the lethargic village. They could always be seen, fifteen or twenty minutes before their actual arrival, riding along the crest of the circular hills that contained the pueblo as in the bottom of a cup. In the distance Don Carlos' great red stallion seemed many times

the size of niña Isabel's little mare, but the mare cantered through the brush with no less vigor than her huge mate. At the first instance, when the remote silhouette of the horses and riders stood out against the sunlit sky, the naked children of the pueblo gathered at its farther end in a gaping fringe of brown bodies and swarthy heads, the women stood watching from the doorways, but the men, arising hastily from their sunbaths, brushing the earth from their yellow trousers, seized their implements and hurried out to the fields. Don Carlos was not deceived. Often he watched them from the hillside through his big binoculars cased in alligator hide, but if they were all actually at work when he arrived he said nothing, since he knew that discipline has its limits.

The niña Isabel always arrived first in the village. When the horses had descended the declivity and reached the level earth, she slapped the mare's glossy neck with her slim hand and it was an inspiring sight to see that little animal canter vehemently across the plain. Even at the age of seventeen Monagas' daughter wore her hair down her back, constrained only by a silver bar that gathered the strands below the nape of her neck. As she cantered toward the village her hair flew out behind her like a jetty plume. Her large black eyes were aglitter with captured sparkles of the sunlight and when she smiled her teeth were like nacreous seeds lying regularly between the two pouted edges of a crimson pod. She was profoundly admired in the village; the children crowded about her, wait-

ing for her gifts of *dulces*; the women petted and caressed her and called her honeyed names; but there also came a time when two of the young men were bold and foolish enough to fall in love with her. . . .

They were of the same age, but dissimilar in appearance. Reynaldo Crespo was a slim youth whose sinuous strength was scarcely suggested by the slenderness of his shoulders nor the long, feminine delicacy of his hands. His father was unknown in the village and Maria, his parched and saturnine old mother, had ever steadfastly refused to reveal the author of her son. Certainly he bore no resemblance to his mother. The older inhabitants of the pueblo recalled a young caballero who had visited the hacienda years before, and when genealogies were discussed he was accounted the father of Reynaldo. But young Manuel Pulido, when speaking to his friends, declared that Reynaldo was assuredly fathered by a he-goat, and saying this he spat scornfully from his thick lips.

He, the other bold one whose temerity permitted him an ardor for niña Isabel, was a common type. He was square and thick. His black hair was perfectly straight and it hung down over his forehead like a thatch. The heavy eyebrows were slanted, the eyelids formed an acute angle with his nose, the cheekbones were elevated, and through his yellow cotton shirt were revealed the formidable muscles of his hairless chest. These physical characteristics denoted his almost purely native ancestry.

For obscure reasons, possibly from an instinctive physical antagonism, Reynaldo and Manuel had been enemies for years. As little boys they had fought a score of times and during their childhood it was a common sight to see them rolling in the dust, wrapped together in a confused entanglement of naked arms and legs. When Manuel fought he frothed at the lips and his face grew purple-red with his rage, but Reynaldo, no less aroused no doubt,

sustained a cooler exterior and thus his greater calm frequently enabled him to obtain an advantage over his more burly antagonist.

Before these boys had reached their adolescence their inveterate enmity had not escaped the notice of the village. "They fight with their teeth and nails now," said old Pedro Gonzales, "but later they will settle the affair with machetes."

In the beginning neither was aware of the other's admiration for the niña Isabel. Naturally, this was not a matter to be spoken to the most intimate confidant. Each held to his own secret. But when the girl came to the village they devised pretexts to busy themselves about the houses. Manuel might sharpen a scythe before his mother's door, never looking at the blade but always at the face of Monagas' daughter, while Reynaldo, with an abrupt access of laudable public spirit, would cut down the weeds along the roadside.

II

MANUEL, although he was the less subtle of the two, was the first to suspect his adversary's passion, and thereupon to reveal his own. The amazing revelation that his enemy harbored the same emotions as himself came to him one morning when Don Carlos' girl was visiting the village alone. She had ridden over to the pueblo on a mission of kindness, bringing with her a supply of quinine for one of the women who was ill with a fever. As she dismounted from her mare, Reynaldo Crespo sprang forward with a lithe swiftness and helped her to descend.

Manuel was standing in his doorway. He had been too lethargic of conception to avail himself of the opportunity which his opponent had so swiftly seized. But into his slow mind came a wonder, an astonishment that slowly passed into amazed comprehension. He saw Reynaldo hold out his ridiculous white hand, receiving upon his palm the flower-like fingers of the girl. His

intent gaze passed from the pair of hands to young Crespo's face and the avidity of Reynaldo's eyes, that looked up at the girl, suddenly confirmed his suspicion.

Mother of the Saviour! This Nameless One, this weed, this living debility, presumed the same passion as himself! The huge hands clenched themselves at his sides, and on his thick neck two tendons were tautly projected like ropes.

He desired to commit some violent act but at the moment nothing appropriate suggested itself. His lips moved, and whispered oaths passed between them like a blasphemous litany. The girl entered one of the houses, but Reynaldo still stood at the horse's head caressing the glossy neck with a tenderness that betrayed his fancy of the moment, for it might have been the face of his beloved. Presently the girl emerged and remounted. She spoke to Reynaldo and smiled, whereat Manuel clenched his teeth and dug his nails into his calloused palms. The little animal cantered off across the plain and both young men followed it with their eyes. One was happy, the other enraged. But both were absurdly bold with hope.

When the girl and her mount had disappeared over the crest of the hill, Manuel sauntered toward his antagonist with a venomous deliberation in his stride.

"Crespo," he said, "I have a word to tell you!"

"What is it?" demanded Reynaldo.

"Probably you'd prefer to hear it privately."

"This is sufficient privacy for me!"

"Very well, then!"

Manuel paused, and he lowered his voice. Two or three villagers, lolling on the earth, watched the pair with a languid curiosity. It was seldom that either addressed the other.

"You," said Manuel, slowly, "are in danger of sudden annihilation!"

"Ah? Annihilation! By the hand of the good God, perhaps! Who else?"

"Mine, imbecile!"

For a moment Reynaldo gave no reply. His mind was swiftly searching for the cause of the attack. Then, in his alert watchfulness, he saw Pulido glance toward the hills, beyond which Isabel was now riding back to the hacienda. The veil was lifted from his comprehension. He, also, understood. And at the spectacle of this broad-faced, thick-lipped clod, revealing in his glance an absurd aspiration, he began to laugh. His mirth was half real and half forced. He held his lips and shook, like an actor in a comic play. Then Manuel, growing purple again, hissed his favorite epithet between his teeth.

"Son of a he-goat!" he said.

Reynaldo stiffened, his laughter ceased, his face grew pale and in the hollow of his throat an artery throbbed like a pulse.

The men who had been watching sprang up from the ground and ran toward the antagonists. They succeeded in separating them at the moment when they grappled.

"Later!" cried Manuel.

"Tomorrow!" answered Reynaldo.

Each was carried away by his friends. But this, it was discovered, was a serious outbreak. It was no simple renewal of the old hostility. A new and alarming cause for enmity, no one knew what, had arisen. Neither youth was to be placated by friendly advice.

"Knives this time," said Reynaldo. "Let no one interfere!"

But early the next morning the proposed engagement of the young men was forgotten in the more formidable hostilities that descended upon the plantation.

III

RUMORS of the revolution had come to Don Carlos' ears for more than a month. Lately word of Andrade's collapse had filtered through to El Callao, thence to the plantation. But to a country disturbed by these political agitations, the ascendancy of one faction

did not mean peace. A new power controlled the federal government, but its influence centered about the capital. The armies of the new government were more formidable than any other force, but they had not achieved their aim. The pacification of the interior of the republic would be a slow business.

Throughout the land every *caudillo* of past insurrections had gathered his bands and to the north of the capital and to the south, and westward as far as Maracaibo these miniature armies roamed and collided, fought obscure and sanguinary engagements and subsisted upon plunder.

It was another uprising in the cause of the "People." Practically, it meant that the cause being for some reason hallowed, such landowners as Don Carlos Monagas were to be violently dispossessed of their holdings by the first armed band that came upon them. But El Callao was very far from the main centers of these activities. Don Carlos had optimistically believed himself secure in his isolation.

On the morning when Manuel Pulido and Reynaldo Crespo were to have fought their duel, about which old Monagas was of course ignorant, the army of General Joaquin Urbaneja arrived from El Callao. The general had been gathering his men for several months, recruiting them from the hills beyond the gold mines. Suddenly he descended upon El Callao and declared himself the dictator of the region. With the hot passion of a satyr for his mistress he declared that the People were about to be avenged. They had been dispossessed, but they were about to regain their rights.

Then the general, who was in need of plunder, sent out his troops to occupy the neighboring plantations. The largest and the most prosperous of these was that of Don Carlos Monagas.

Old Monagas was superintending the shoeing of a horse in the corral when a group of frightened men came running in from the cocoanut groves.

"*Los soldados! Las tropas!*" they cried.

Old Don Carlos stood silently a moment looking at his men, but when some of them broke away and began running afoot toward the village he shrugged his shoulders and walked toward the hacienda. He had given them and their families twenty years of security and ease, but they were cravens and they would not fight for him. A concerted resistance was impossible. Nevertheless, he himself did not intend to surrender.

He walked more rapidly and was running before he reached the house. Indoors he called for his daughter. She appeared in her short corduroy skirt and her flexible boots, for they had planned to ride down to the pueblo that morning. In a few words Don Carlos explained what had happened.

"They will be here in a few minutes!" he said.

"Good," replied Isabel, and her fearlessness darted in flames from her jetty eyes, "we will lock the doors and shoot them down from the windows!"

"Who, my child? You and I, alone? There will be no one else. No; you must escape. Take the stallion; you can ride him. He has never felt a whip; whip him if need be! Follow the banks of the river and by nightfall you can reach Don Antonio's plantation. Tell him the news and he will give you a fresh horse and probably go on with you himself. It will be as useless for him to remain as it would have been for me, had I known this in time. Hurry! And goodbye!"

But even as he took her in his arms, the girl struggled to free herself from his embrace.

"No, no!" she cried. "I will not leave you! I'll stay!"

He forced her to the door, he embraced her again and he said:

"I won't have time to pray for you, child. The good God is careless at such times as these. But you can ride as well as any man and you will escape."

And he stood a moment watching the girl as she ran toward the corral.

Then, presently, those in the village heard the sound of firing in the direction of the hacienda. They were amazed. They gathered in the dirt road and strained their eyes as if they might see over the tops of the hills and through the intervening cocoanut groves to the distant home of Don Carlos Monagas. But before the firing ceased those who had run from the hacienda arrived with the news. The noise of musketry stopped. A flame, like a crimson serpent's tongue, darted up into the sunlight, beyond the hills. The hacienda was burning. And then the troops descended into the village.

IV

THEY impressed the most robust of the young men, carried off the best-looking women, burned the thatches, slew all the pigs and goats and packed the flesh on the mules, and proceeded toward the river. One of the new soldiers in General Urbaneja's army was Manuel Pulido.

As for Reynaldo, he had escaped. He was quicker of wit than the others. Moreover, he had instantly conceived a plan. As if this universal disaster had come but to insure his own good fortune, he foresaw his opportunity. As soon as the news reached the pueblo, before the appearance of the soldiers, young Crespo secured a horse. It was the only beast of its kind in the village, it belonged to the *jefe civil*, but in the confusion he had but to take it. Beating upon the ribs of the animal with a stick, he galloped toward the burning hacienda.

The troops of General Urbaneja passed, but Reynaldo made the animal lie down in the bushes and he was unnoticed. When all the insurrectos had ridden by, he continued. He had watched them with omnivorous eyes and he was positive that niña Isabel was not one of their captives. This assurance filled him with the oppressed

emotions of joy and fear. But it was unlikely, he told himself, that the girl had been slain. Urbaneja would not have permitted that, for had he seen her he would have taken her for himself. Doubtless she was hiding, and now that the troops were gone, he would find her. His heart bounded and beat painfully with his visions of their meeting.

When he came to the hacienda the fire had almost completed its work. The white walls were blackened, the roof was gone, and out of the ruins ascended several wan spirals of smoke. He advanced cautiously, fearing that a guard had been left. But everything of value was gone, and so were all the invaders. The place was invested with an awesome stillness. All the cries of animals, the neighing of the horses, the barnyard noises, the bellowing of steers, all that had given life to this center of a large life, was stilled. And where was the girl?

It was useless to seek for her among the smoking ruins. Moreover, Reynaldo refused to believe that she was there. He rode a little way into the cocoanut grove, calling her name, and in the trees a parrot mocked him with a shrill screaming. He came back to the hacienda and then, behind the mud-plastered stables, that had been left untouched, he heard the sound of a woman weeping.

He rode his horse across the littered corral, circled the squat building, and found an old woman hidden in the straw. She had been one of the house servants. At once, recognizing young Crespo, she deluged him with piteous incoherencies.

"Where is niña Isabel?" he asked.

"Ay, dear Mother of our Lord!" cried the ancient woman. "*misericordia, misericordia!* They had faces like apes, they were not men but devils. And poor Don Carlos dead — *pobrecito, pobrecito!* Where are my six gold pieces and my string of coral beads! Oh Jesus! Oh dear Mother of our Lord!"

Young Crespo seized her wrist and gripped her fingers about the withered flesh.

"Where is the niña Isabel?" he demanded, and there was a tense ferocity in his voice. "Hurry, vieja! Tell me!"

In spite of his ferocity it was not easy to bring any order into the mind of the aged victim. But after a while Reynaldo learned that she had ridden down toward the river, and instantly he guessed her objective. He lifted the stick and beat the hindquarters of his horse; the old woman screamed as the animal reared, flung a cloud of dust upon her, and galloped away.

That evening, as the twilight was passing swiftly into dusk, a haggard young man, ceaselessly switching a limping mount, arrived at the hacienda of Don Antonio Alcántara. Don Antonio himself came out to meet him. The planter was girded with a thick belt from which projected two long-barreled pistols.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I'm from Don Carlos' plantation," answered Reynaldo, holding to the horse's twisted mane in order to steady his trembling body.

"Ah! For the love of God! And Don Carlos?"

"Dead!"

Alcántara, turning paler, began to curse. The oaths poured over his lips bitterly and he clasped the handles of his two pistols with tense fingers. Then, abruptly ceasing his invective against a villainous fate, he said to the young stranger:

"Say nothing to anyone. His daughter is here. We must not tell her yet!"

His words affected Reynaldo like a potent wine. With an amazing reassertion of his vigor, he sprang down from his horse.

"Here?" he cried. "Then, señor, we'll fight! Arm your men! Give us horses and guns! Tomorrow, when Urbaneja arrives he will meet with a terrible surprise. My name is Reynaldo Crespo. I am an honorable man. Constitute me your leader, señor!"

V

NOTHING could prevail against the impetuous genius of young Crespo. He harangued the workers, saw that they were armed, warned them that their only chance lay in victory and led them out into the hills to watch for the insurrectos. Some had no other weapons than machetes.

"You will find use for them!" he cried.

He had already seen the girl and as she lay pallid among the cushions of a great chair, he had lifted her white hand and touched it with his fiery lips.

"Believe in me!" he exclaimed to her. "I will avenge you!"

That he had ridden all day, that an hour before he had been exhausted, were nothing. A surge of inexhaustible vigor bounded through his veins. The men lay in the bushes and talked a while, but presently they slept. Reynaldo remained awake. Anxiety consumed him, but above all his fears he was sustained by an unconquerable faith. Fortune had smiled upon him, terribly it was true, but with golden lips. In the morning, when Urbaneja and his men appeared along the river bank they would be shot down to the last man by a concealed foe. And he visioned himself returning to Isabel, who must already be regarding him with different eyes. What did it matter that he was penniless? What hindrance was his origin in such a time as this? There were no barriers that could restrain him from his felicity. And in his fancy he was already stroking the dusky cheeks and meeting with his own the crimson, pouted lips.

VI

THE surprise that awaited Urbaneja fell upon him shortly after dawn, and in sight of the hacienda. When his men perceived the clustered buildings from a distance they uttered a concerted shout. Those who had been unfortunate in the division of yesterday's

plunder were inspired with fresh hopes. They had wooed a very gracious mistress, this one of war. Even old Don Carlos' men, who had been compelled to a new allegiance, were aroused by the lawless spirit of their companions. Abruptly some of the men ceased to regret, as they had regretted through the night, their former security. They saw themselves amazingly enriched, and they shouted with the others.

Urbaneja halted his men and consulted with his colonel, whose great moustaches were only a trifle less awesome than those of his leader. Then, as the troops remained motionless, a word passed through young Crespo's concealed forces. In his excitement Don Antonio sought to struggle to his feet, but the coolness of his young ally saved him from this possible betrayal of their presence. Reynaldo seized his coat and as he pulled him back the guns spoke, almost in unison.

Urbaneja's men never had the opportunity to find and face their assailants. Confusion dismayed them immediately. The horses reared, trampling down their wounded riders who had fallen to the ground. Urbaneja was shot from his horse and his body, falling near the edge, rolled down the river bank and floated off, face upward, in the swarthy water. A few escaped; others were pursued and overtaken. Those with machetes amongst the victors dispatched the wounded with merciless ferocity. And just as Reynaldo Crespo was certain of his success, he espied the thick figure of Manuel Pulido mounting a riderless horse. Until that moment he had forgotten his enemy. Yesterday they were to have fought together with knives for the sake of the girl, Isabel! Ah, how far was yesterday! But he had no forgiveness for Manuel. Three of his own men pursued that luckless fellow and captured him.

"This is my prisoner," said Reynaldo to Don Antonio. "I shall decide what to do with him. For the present I don't want him to be shot. Tie him up some-

where and put a guard over him."

Then, again, Reynaldo Crespo forgot about Manuel. The old enmity had grown remote, the old life had departed. Don Antonio treated the young leader with great kindness, and assured him that henceforth he was his own son. A few weeks after the engagement a detachment of federal troops arrived at El Callao upon the duty of pacification. They came out to the plantation and their colonel was magnificently entertained. When they departed they took with them the few prisoners who had been permitted to live, among them Manuel Pulido. Since these men had not been shot, it was presumed that they were of some political importance. They were sent to Caracas and imprisoned. And young Crespo was not even aware of the fate of his old adversary.

VII

BUT in the prison Manuel thought ceaselessly of his enemy. Bad food, a damp cell and the vermin that infested these quarters could not subdue the spirit of his hate. It was fed by the envenomed knowledge that Reynaldo must have attained to his desire. Again and again he asked himself why he had not ridden to the hacienda, like his rival. Had he also followed after the girl he and Reynaldo would have met somewhere along the river bank and fought their quarrel to its conclusion. What an end was this!

An end? No; and Manuel swore that whenever he was released he would find Reynaldo and slay him. There was no possibility of happiness for himself, but sooner or later he would put an end to the other's felicity. If he could find him in the arms of his wife, of the niña Isabel—ah, so much the better, for then he would be torn from her embrace with a knife between his shoulders.

When would he be released? His slow mind was possessed with a terrible patience. Even after five years he

did not despair. A political prisoner serves no appointed term, and is not sentenced to a definite confinement. Manuel saw white-haired men in the prison and knew, now, that they had grown old there. Yet, in the simplicity of his vengeful spirit, he told himself that his own fate would be different. There was a deed to perform and it was impossible that the performance of it would be denied him.

Lines came into his face, his skin grew yellow and parched, but his eyes were vital with an imperishable, sombre flame, and something of the old strength remained in his massive shoulders.

One morning, in the eleventh year of his incarceration, Manuel heard the tread of the guards in the corridor and the clang of iron doors being swung back. A guard came to his own cell and unlocked the door. Manuel looked up sullenly from his stool, where he crouched with his heavy hands dangling between his knees.

"*Levántese!*" commanded the guard. Manuel arose.

"What do you want?" he muttered.

"*Venga conmigo!*" said the guard, sharply.

Manuel Pulido did as he was bidden. He followed through the corridor, and he noticed that behind other guards other prisoners were following. He was taken into a large room where, at a gleaming mahogany desk, sat the austere governor of the prison. The governor began to read a crisp paper decorated with gaudy seals. Suddenly Manuel understood. It was a general amnesty of all political prisoners. He was free!

An hour later, standing outside the white walls of the prison, that seemed incandescent in the dazzling sunlight, he remained for a while without thought. Both body and mind were stuporous. He saw a young girl pass, carrying a parasol. An old man blundered by supporting a huge tray by two straps from the shoulders, crying out constantly in a quavering voice: "*Dulces! Dulces!*" A little boy, en-

tirely naked, paused at the curb, sucked on one grimy thumb, and stared at Manuel. Then Manuel, awakened to a consciousness of his freedom by these evidences of the city's life, asked himself an abrupt question. Where was Reynaldo Crespo? Ah, he would be found!

Later in the day he sat at a table in a dirty *botiquín* near the Flower Market. Opposite him was seated a disreputable old man with yellow tobacco stains in his white beard. This old man had no money of his own, and Manuel had very little, but he was willing to pay for the *cinta verde* the old man consumed, because here was one who knew all the gossip of the city.

"There was man named Crespo, Reynaldo Crespo," said Manuel. "You've heard of him?"

What, Reynaldo Crespo? Of course he lived in the capital, he lived in a big white house in El Paraíso and he was a wealthy man.

"Eh! What is it, señor!" exclaimed the disreputable old man—but Manuel was already at the door and gone.

He was striding down the Plaza with a smile on his thick lips. The good fortune of his enemy seemed a fit, a very proper circumstance, for now his revenge would be the more spectacular.

THE remote heights of the Avila were deeply purple, and the sun had descended behind their ridge, as Manuel Pulido stopped in front of the white house whose oaken door bore a gleaming knocker of polished bronze. Resolutely he mounted the steps and lifted the knocker. A porter answered his summons.

"Tell the señor that an old acquaintance is here to see him," said Manuel.

The porter hesitated, for this Pulido had none of the aspect of one of his master's acquaintances. But there was something intimidating in the glances of the massive, yet shrunken, man, and the servant finally admitted him to the corridor.

Left alone, Manuel looked about him.

The potted ferns, the palms in cement boxes, the green wicker chairs, the mosaic on the floor, enraged him. This was the place where the other had lived while he rotted away in a prison cell!

Then Reynaldo came in.

The two men stared at each other. Manuel, through scarcely parted teeth, was the first to speak.

"Reynaldo Crespo!" he said. "Is this a surprise? You never troubled yourself to discover whether I was living or dead!"

"You are—Manuel Pulido!" cried Reynaldo, with abrupt recognition. "Manuel Pulido! I had forgotten you!"

"Forgotten me?"

Manuel was speechless for an instant. The enormity of this confession appalled him. And then, hunching his head between his great, bent shoulders, he said:

"But I hadn't forgotten you, señor Crespo! Eleven years, all the days and nights, in a dirty hole-way, there's a good remembrancer! And the niña Isabel was a better!"

Reynaldo made a curious, surprised gesture, but Manuel continued:

"Did you think you could take her away from me, and live forever with your prize? Didn't it come to you sometimes that I was sure to return for a reckoning? Son of a he-goat! Can you guess what I've come here for?"

It startled Manuel Pulido when his enemy began to laugh. He laughed quietly, in a melancholy way, without the faintest sign of mirth.

"What a mistake—" he began.

"Imbecile!" broke in Manuel. "Understand! I've come to kill you!"

He made a swift motion toward his belt but even as he withdrew the short-bladed knife Reynaldo did not stir. There was, however, a gathering comprehension in his eyes.

"For the sake of the niña Isabel?" he asked. "Ah, my poor Manuel, but you've no cause! Is this the hope that's been supporting you all these hard

years? To come and find me and make me pay? What a mistake! How was it that I forgot you, Manuel? So many things happened to me. . . . Our old quarrel lost its importance. If I had known where you were, I'd have caused you to be released. Think of it, Manuel—for eleven years—didn't you say eleven years?—you've been planning a revenge that was needless! Did you believe that the thing we hoped for when we were boys came true for me? No, Manuel, I didn't take our Isabel from you. Fortune took her from us both!"

The slow mind of Manuel Pulido grappled with these words. He hesitated before he rushed upon the slim figure that confronted him.

"Ay, and what do you mean?" he muttered.

Reynaldo laughed briefly, with a faint bitterness.

"That I was no more successful than yourself," he answered.

Manuel, fingering the blade of the knife, still stared. Strangely enough, he felt himself trembling a little. He seemed to sense, without comprehending, an intolerable frustration. Another antagonist, formless, and immeasurably more formidable than Reynaldo Crespo, seemed to confront him.

"She," went on Reynaldo, "our niña Isabel, didn't take either of us, old enemy. For ten years she has been married to another. . . ."

A terrible weakness came to Manuel. All the hardships of the prison seemed to gather into his flesh in an instant of time. That protracted trial, those interminable years—he had endured them because the savage prospect of destroying his successful enemy sustained him. Yet he knew now that Reynaldo had said the truth. Their ancient quarrel, the revenge for which he had lived, was suddenly meaningless. And this quarrel, and the protracted hope of revenge—these had been his life! His life—was meaningless!

In his simplicity he found insupportable this last sardonic thrust of fortune. He raised his eyes and with a passionate gesture thrust the useless knife toward Reynaldo.

"Take it!" he cried. "Push the blade into my own breast, for the love of God, Reynaldo!"

The blade dropped out of his fingers. His head fell. Tears moistened his parched cheeks. Then Reynaldo, smil-

ing a little, approached him and touched his shoulder.

"Manuel," he said, "it's hardly to be believed—but you're still living in the days of our early youth. They've gone, don't you see? We're older now. Old enemy, poor Manuel, life has surprised you . . . surprised us both. Suppose —let us contrive a further surprise of our own will! Give me your hand, old enemy. Let us be friends!"



Clair De Lune

By William Upson

THE party was over and the young man and the girl were walking home through the silent deserted streets of the Virginia village. The August moon, shining through the trees overhead, made little bright patches on the sidewalk.

Timidly the young man reached out and took the girl's arm; but she drew it away and they walked on in silence. The girl smiled.

They passed an ancient house with a front yard full of rose bushes. The air was heavy with fragrance.

"We have roses at home," said the young man. "If you wish, I will bring you some tomorrow."

"I don't like roses," she said. . . .

Again they walked on in silence. At the edge of town they came out from under the trees into the full light of the moon, and stopped at a little white gate in front of an old white house.

"I'll say good night here," said the girl. She opened the gate, passed through, closed it, and turned around.

The young man looked out over the fields and up at the sky. The moon was very large and round and golden—as it always is in August. The whole valley was flooded with a hazy golden glow. Far away, a long bank of gleaming mist outlined the course of the Potomac.

The young man turned to the girl. Her soft hair and her filmy gown seemed a part of the moonlight and mist. She placed her hands on the gate and he covered them with his.

"The moon is full tonight," he said gently.

The girl laughed maliciously. "Yes," she said, "it's the wrong time to plant turnips."

"Don't, you hurt me."

"I'm sorry, but I love—I love to tease you."

"Please don't." The young man's voice became strained and hurried. "I never knew until tonight how beautiful you were. I never knew I was so fond of you. Tell me—will you marry me?"

The girl jerked her hands away. "No," she said, "I can't. I can't. I didn't know." She fled up the walk and entered the house.

Slowly the young man went home. He lit the light in his little bedroom. On the bureau were photographs of three or four young women. He looked them over thoughtfully, and as he went to bed he hummed a little tune.

* * * * *

The next morning the telephone rang, and he heard the voice which had teased him the night before.

"Will you come to supper tonight?"

"Certainly."

She met him at the door with a smile, and held out both hands to him in welcome. He noticed that she wore her prettiest dress.

At supper she sat next to him. She told him she had made the cake herself. It was the kind she knew he liked. After supper the rest of the family went upstairs, and she started the open fire—which was unnecessary, as it was not cold. She turned down the lights and seated herself on the rug in front of the fireplace.

"Come," she said softly, and he sat down beside her.

After a while, "The fire is very beautiful," she said.

"Yes."

"Do you know—only twice in my life have I ever lied to you?"

The young man was silent.

"Once was when I said I didn't like roses."

Still the young man was silent. The fire flickered lower. . . .

Finally the young man stood up. "Time to go home," he said. And with a cheery "good night" he was gone.



The Voice

By A. Newberry Choyce

SOMETIMES in the quiet
Comes a whispered word
Softer than human's call
Or any earthly bird.

And fain I would answer
That grave and that wise
Stranger I may never
See with my eyes.

Oh, in the fastness
That is my breast,
Who are you that call
And what is your quest?



The Man I Met Everywhere

By *Gregory Piotrowski*

(Former Personal Aide to Czar Nicholas II of Russia)

I FIRST met Serge Kasanoff in school in Petrograd, where we had migrated from different parts of the Russian Empire. So vastly different were our tastes, dispositions and temperaments that we never became friends. However, after matriculation we met with remarkable accuracy, always unexpectedly and almost everywhere. If I would board a train, enter a hotel or a theatre in any of the different cities of Russia and the various capitals of Europe, unfailingly I would encounter this man. These constant meetings made me superstitious. I began to feel that Fate was bringing us together for some interior tragic purpose; and the momentous occasion finally arrived when my fears were to be realized.

The affair began when aviation was in its infancy. I was one of the officers sent to France by the Russian government to learn to fly. I went to Pau, a little town in southern France, where the brothers Wright, Henry Farman and Louis Bleriot had installed their flying schools.

In Pau I could not expect to meet anybody of my acquaintance—but—I met—Serge Kasanoff. He was on leave from the Treasury Department where he held a position; and had come to France to learn to fly with the ambition of being among the first Russian aviators.

So we became colleagues once more; though beneath a veneer of extreme formality.

My relations, however, became more and more friendly with Madame Tatiana Kasanoff, who followed her

husband so as to watch his progress.

After several months Serge Kasanoff and I received our pilot's licenses and returned to Russia, where I was appointed a flying instructor at the Military Aviation Ground at Petrograd. Serge Kasanoff obtained a flying machine of his own and took part in various flight meetings as an amateur.

Of course, I used to visit Madame Kasanoff, and my interest in that lady grew stronger and stronger. Her afternoon teas were delightful. But I liked them better when the husband was not at home. Then I would remain in Kasanoff's house a little later than the other visitors, and occasionally Tatiana and I would go for a walk or a drive.

II

ONE evening Tatiana came to see me.

"Serge went to Moskow," she said, "He will not return until tomorrow." Tatiana was wonderful, and she had so many, many things to tell me.

* * * * *

IT was late at night when we approached Kasanoff's house. There were lights in the windows. Tatiana's husband had returned!

"I have no excuse—I simply cannot go in at two o'clock in the morning . . ." Tatiana's voice trembled. She looked at me appealingly.

"What shall I do?" she asked pathetically.

"Divorce Serge and marry me."

"Divorce, marry you," she repeated automatically. "Just think of the

scandal!" And then, bending close to my ear she whispered:

"I love you too much to marry you. A wife is always a handicap to a strong man. A child needs the companionship of a woman. A man needs only her love—and you have my love."

"I know your foolish philosophy, dear. But,—what else can we do?" I said.

Suddenly Tatiana became unusually gay, and laughed.

"I know what to do. I have thought of something. But first,—kiss me."

"My dear crazy Tatiana—don't forget we are in the street!"

"All right, then I'll wait. Because we are going to take a taxicab and you will kiss me then!"

Talking and coquetting, Tatiana explained her scheme. She wanted to be taken to Lobino—Kasanoff's country house.

"That is the only place that could logically shelter me now, in my absence at home. Before my husband left for Moskow he suggested my going to Lobino to prepare the house for the summer."

"But that place is forty miles away and the roads at this time are very bad," I said. "We will never reach Lobino before the day breaks; and Serge must long since have tried to call you by telephone and must now know that you are not in Lobino. Furthermore, why should you have taken a taxicab instead of your own car?"

Tatiana was not in the least disconcerted.

"The roads are bad, are they not? They are *very* bad? You are confident of that?" she asked teasingly.

"Undoubtedly—as usual in the springtime," I answered.

"That's splendid! It saves the situation! You understand? The roads are almost impassable and it might easily take a day and a night to reach the place. As for using a taxicab—is it not a perfectly touching proof of a wife's self-sacrifice not to take the comfortable car her husband gave her

in order to save it from the bad roads? . . ."

When we were seated in the taxicab I kissed Tatiana madly.

Suddenly she interrupted my tender demonstrations. "It appears to me our bad roads are the best things we have in Russia . . ." she said.

III

The drive was abominable. By six o'clock in the morning we had gone thirty miles and had ten more before us. Then the motor stopped. We had run out of gasoline, and there was no hope of getting any more! A poor small village about a mile away was the only place we could even ask for help. I sent the chauffeur there.

"Kerosene. Buy all the kerosene they have. Take it out of their lamps—and ask for horses, too."

It was an hour before the chauffeur returned in a peasant wagon with the peasant driving the horse.

"The kerosene they have is impossible, sir. It is more like crude-oil, and—there is the horse."

"Have you not a better horse?"

The peasant got down from the wagon, took his hat off, scratched his head and finally replied:

"No, sir. This is the best one."

"How long will it take to reach Lobino with that animal?"

"Three hours, sir."

"Three hours—you are sure?"

"Perhaps four—"

"And perhaps five?"

"Possibly five," replied the peasant philosophically.

"Don't you know?"

"Nobody knows, sir. On account of yesterday's rain we may not get there at all."

At this instant I heard the noise of a motor droning.

Tatiana, the chauffeur, and eventually, the peasant looked up into the sky. An aeroplane approached and passed above us. Suddenly the noise ceased and the aeroplane started down.

"It is falling," shouted the chauffeur.

I knew it was not falling, but it did come down in a well controlled volplane. Might something have gone wrong and the pilot have decided to land in order to prevent a serious accident—or had he recognized us?

"It looks like Serge's machine," exclaimed Tatiana, in French. She used that language always when surprised or when she had something very important to say.

"All aeroplanes look alike, my dear, but in this particular case—you are right. That is your husband. I recognize Serge by his manner of landing."

Tatiana laughed and so did I. Sheer bravado. We were caught. It was the Fate which presided always in bringing Kasanoff and me together.

"It is very nice of Serge to come so far so early to say good morning to his wife and to shake hands with his friend, is it not?"

Tatiana could not stop laughing. Meantime the aviator got out from his machine and approached us rapidly.

It was Serge Kasanoff—the man I met everywhere. . . .

I lowered the blinds of the taxicab where Tatiana was sitting and went toward him.

"What are you doing here?" he shouted.

"It is extraordinary that I meet you everywhere! But it is Fate!"

Kasanoff came closer to me and we shook hands.

"It must be! It is necessary!" Kasanoff looked me straight in the eye. Did he suspect me or was he merely calculating the coincidence?

Then he began to explain his presence.

"I decided to fly to look for my wife."

"For your wife?"

"She did not expect me home last night and may be—" Kasanoff paused and I understood he did it purposely to watch the expression of my face.

Then he suddenly questioned me:

"Did you not see her?"

"Yes—I saw her—yesterday at an afternoon tea."

"Did she mention going to Lobino?"

"Yes, she told me she intended to go there because she did not expect you that night."

"Ah! Exactly what I thought." Kasanoff became reassured. He continued:

"I decided to fly over early in the morning, you know, when the air is usually calm. I did not call her by telephone just to surprise her. Then I had magneto trouble and landed."

Suddenly Kasanoff seemed to recall something which made him again suspicious and uneasy.

"But what are you doing here on the road to my country home?"

"I am in trouble, too," I answered quickly. "I have a girl in the taxicab but no gasoline in the tank."

"A lady in your car? And on the road leading to my house? Really if I were not used to our unexpected meetings everywhere I should be suspicious!" Kasanoff laughed sincerely.

"Never mind, be suspicious but help me!"

"How can I help you?"

"Give me the gasoline you have in your aeroplane! It is a love affair. I stole the girl from her relatives. We're on our way to be married. The church happens to be in the neighborhood of your country place. The priest there is the only one I know who would perform the marriage ceremony without the usual formalities. But if we do not get there in time he may change his mind or her relatives may catch us and prevent the wedding, and then I should miss my opportunity. Do you understand how important it is for me to obtain gasoline?"

"What you tell me is extremely interesting. I shall be glad to help you, of course."

"Thank you. You can't get away anyhow with your rotten magneto. I will send you help. On my way I will stop at your house, call up the Aero Club, and they will send you mechanics, gasoline and whatever else you need."

Meantime we approached the taxicab.

"All right," said Kasanoff, "but pull up the blinds of your car and present me to the lady."

"Oh, my dear fellow! Under the circumstances—impossible! You must realize the young lady's feelings. She is young, unsophisticated. Suppose our marriage should not materialize. I love her. I must protect her name!"

* * * * *

IN a few moments, our tanks were filled with gasoline taken from Kasanoff's aeroplane. We shook hands cor-

dially for the first time in our lives.

"Please tell my wife that I did my best to give her a nice surprise and it is no fault of mine that I failed. Good luck!"

* * * * *

AT that instant Fate eliminated Kasanoff from the equation of my existence. I have never seen him from that day until this. As for Tatiana—when we reached Lobino we did not tarry. We kept straight on together, and we have never turned back.



For North Is North

By Fairfax Downey

"A H, there you are, old man," called the happy bridegroom, leaning out of the line at the wedding reception to greet me. "Annabelle, this is an old friend and classmate of mine who has been toiling for five years in the wilds of South America. He just got back tonight and managed to get civilized enough to take in this wedding of ours. Bill, this is my wife."

With a proudly proprietary air, the bridegroom led me to the bride, who seemed to be a charming girl, if young. But then Johnny always was given to robbing the cradle. The bride swayed toward me.

Remembering that it used to be the thing back here in the States to kiss the bride at weddings, I did so. Well! Undoubtedly it was still the thing. And brides are being cordial this season to old friends of husbands.

When my vision cleared, I looked further along the line and beheld six young and beautiful bridesmaids, who, if it is not presumption to say so, wore an air of expectancy. None of them I knew. Probably they had just been entering school when I left for South America. I had started to shake hands with the first, when—well, I didn't kiss her. I shall be chivalrous and say—we kissed.

For the second I was prepared to a certain extent. But we kissed and continued to kiss. Kisses, I have always thought, are like parties. It is up to the ladies to leave first.

It was the next girl who murmured she knew my family well.

It certainly was a tie that bound. The fourth girl took time out to ask me if I had anything on the hip, and was so disappointed when I replied in the negative, she passed me on a little ahead of schedule. In the movies they don't allow osculation a third as long as the next bridesmaid went in for. I felt as if I ought to marry the sixth girl.

When I told the bridegroom a little later that business had called me back to South America sooner than I had anticipated, he accused me of eagerness to rejoin the fascinating Spanish señoritas of those tropic climes.

"I hear they're hot stuff," said he.

"Oh, no," I hastened to assure him, as I glanced back at the reception line which was still in action. "You'd be surprised to find how cold and undemonstrative those señoritas are."

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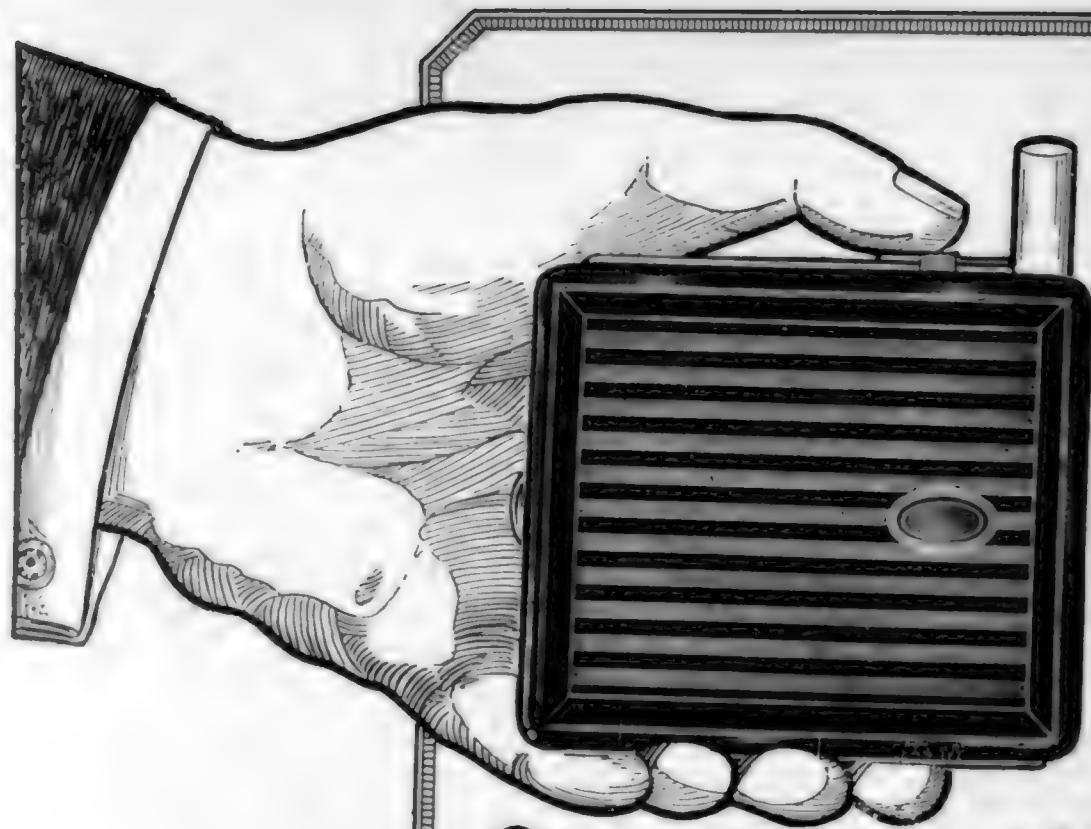
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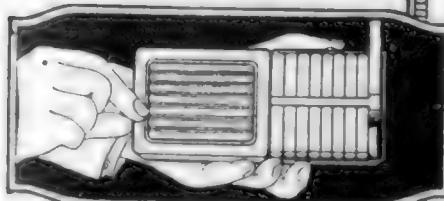
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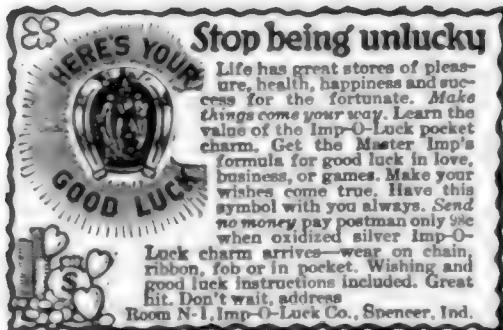
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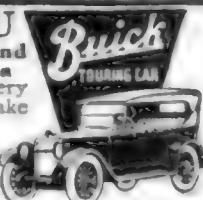
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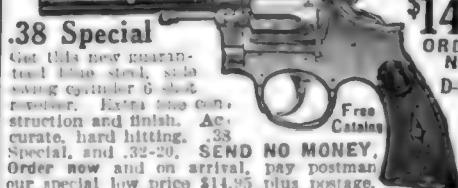
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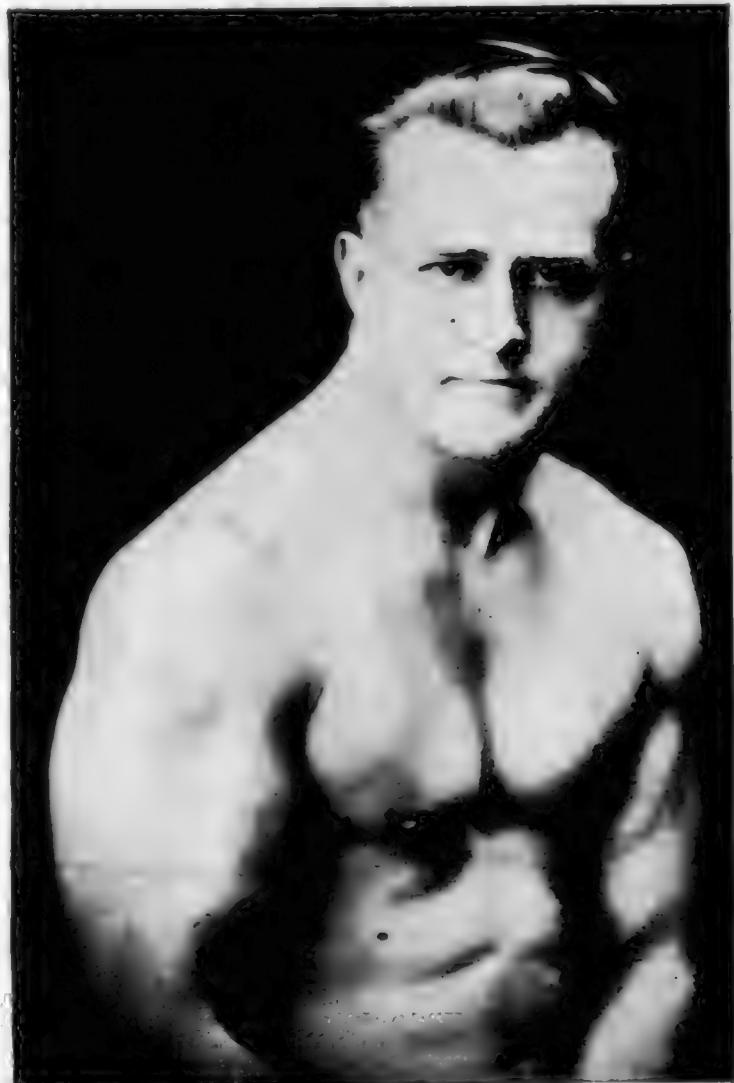
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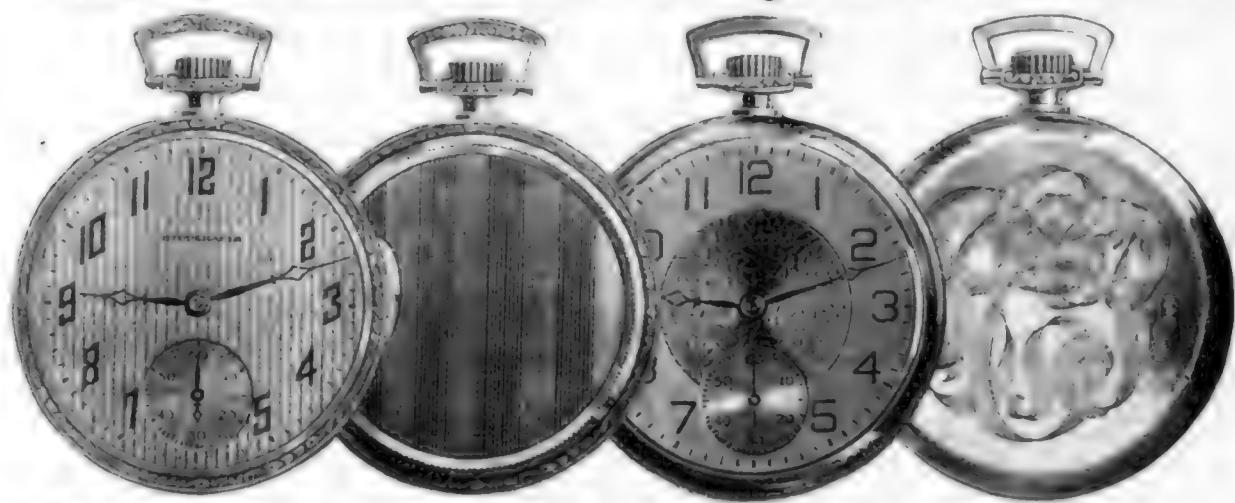
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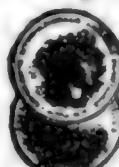
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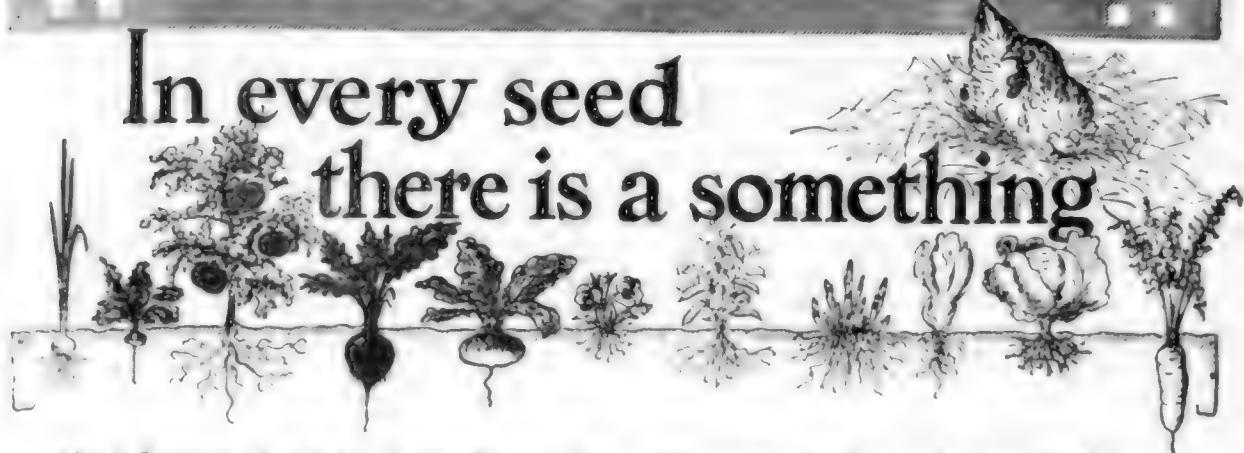


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that knows how to take from its environment the wherewithal to build the body of the organism it animates. From the little seed you place in the ground this **something** sends roots into the earth, blades or branches into the air, and takes **from** the earth and the air that with which it builds.

Within the egg this **something** is wooed to life by the warmth of the brooding mother's breast.

CHIROPRACTIC

teaches that this **something** knows the secret of converting food into flesh and blood, and carries on all the processes of life, in the human body, by means of impulses sent over the nerves. It teaches that when a nerve is impaired by a vertebra becoming misaligned, these impulses do not flow over the nerves normally, and the result is what we call dis-ease. To get the dis-eased member to function again it is necessary to adjust the vertebra that is pressing on the nerve, to normal alignment, thereby permitting the normal flow of impulses over the nerve.

To adjust the vertebra to normal alignment is the work of a competent chiropractor.

A trial will convince the most skeptical of the correctness of these principles.

DEFINITION

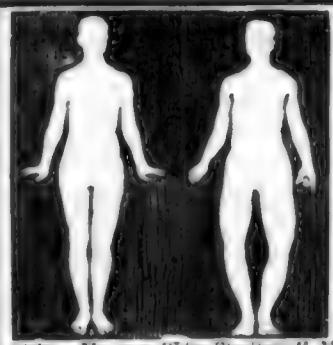
The practice of Chiropractic consists of the palpation and adjustment, with the hands, of the movable segments of the spinal column to normal position for the purpose of releasing the imprisoned impulse.



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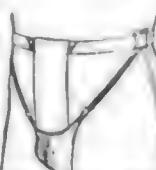
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